POEMS AND POETIC DRAMAS

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THE POEMS AND PLAYS
OF
William Vaughn Moody
IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

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Wm Vaughn Moody.

The
POEMS AND PLAYS
of
William Vaughn Moody

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN M. MANLY

VOL. I

POEMS AND POETIC DRAMAS

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INTRODUCTION

NOT merely because William Vaughn Moody was my colleague and my friend do I wish to speak of him, but because I feel that the poetry he left us is of unique and permanent value to us all, and believe that it was growing in depth, in sweetness, and in strength when the darkness descended so tragically upon him. The beauty of poetry as little needs the aid of argument as does that of a rose, and Moody's poetry is here to manifest its own loveliness and power; but the lover of beauty in a poem or in a rose may increase his delight by sharing it with another, and I, who have seen Moody's poetry growing into fuller and fuller kinship with that of the elder and most authentic poets of our tongue, while retaining its own unmistakable individuality, would gladly share my vision and delight.

Of the sanity and manifold charm of the man himself, no description, much less so brief an account as this must be, can give any adequate idea. A volume of his letters soon to be published under the care of one of his most intimate friends will make it possible for all to know something of his vigor, his grace, his humor, his courage, his large humanity, his daily passion for material and spiritual beauty; and these letters will give a fuller record of the notable incidents of his life than can be attempted here. But his work was so natural and inevitable a flowering of his whole being that something must be said of his character and his career.

Like so many men of unusual intellectual and emotional powers, Moody was one in whom different racial or temperamental strains met and blended. His father, Francis Burdette Moody, was of English and French descent; his mother, Henrietta Stoy, of English and German. To them were born three sons and four daughters. The third son and sixth child was William Vaughn, who was born at Spencer, Indiana, on July 8, 1869. That the father was a man of enterprise and of vigor is indicated not merely by his emigration from New York to the thriving State of Indiana, but also by the fact that he was for many years a steamboat captain, an occupation requiring no little resourcefulness, power of rapid decision, and ability to command men. To him his son pays a noble tribute in certain lines of "The Daguerreotype." But the mother doubtless had the larger share in the guidance and discipline of the growing boy, and the profound impression she left upon his mind and heart is recorded not only in "The Daguerreotype" — a poem so deep of thought, so full of poignant feeling and clairvoyant vision, so wrought of passionate beauty that I know not where to look for another tribute from any poet to his mother that equals it — and in the veiled but illuminating reference in "Faded Pictures," but even more fully in that love and reverence for woman which became fundamental to his whole philosophy of life.

About 1871 the family moved to New Albany, on the Ohio River, and there the mother died in 1884 and the father in 1886. After his father's death the career of Moody was much like that of many another ambitious boy. He taught for a while in a country school near New Albany, and in the autumn of 1888 went to Riverside Academy, New York, where he helped with the teaching to put himself through school. From 1889 to 1893 he was technically an undergraduate at Harvard

University, but, having completed the courses necessary for his degree, he went abroad in his senior year as tutor for a boy. The year was notable for a walking trip through the Black Forest and Switzerland with Robert Lovett and Norman Hapgood and L. H. Dow, for the winter which he spent in Florence, and for his first visit to Greece. In 1893–94 he was back at Harvard as a member of the Graduate School. What courses of study he took I do not know, but I remember hearing at the time from Professor Kittredge of his insatiable appetite for mediæval French romances. At the end of the year he took his master's degree and became a member of the staff of the department of English.

In the autumn of 1895 he came to the University of Chicago as instructor in English and continued to serve as instructor and assistant professor until 1903. His work as a teacher was relieved by various trips in this country and abroad. In June, 1896, he made a ten-day bicycle trip with Ferdinand Schevill through northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. The spring and summer of 1897 he spent in Europe. His experiences there included a bicycle trip with Ferdinand Schevill from Rome to Lake Como, through the Alban Hills and over the Apennines. At Sorrento he saw the Eastertide procession that suggested his poem "Good Friday Night." During the bicycle trip mentioned he sketched the "Road-Hymn for the Start." The imagery of the poem recalls conditions and circumstances connected with Montefiascone and Lago di Bolsena. In June he was with his friends, the Lovetts, at Venice in the Casa Frollo on the Giudecca. Later he visited Asolo and tramped with Robert Lovett through the Dolomites. The same trip included an ascent of the Grosser Venediger. This was followed by a brief residence at Cortina, where he and Lovett found delight in climbing mountains and in ice-cold plunges into a pool fed by a neighboring glacier. He then returned to Ravenna and thence bicycled alone across Italy to Genoa. On account of the intense heat he was obliged to travel mostly by night, and an illness which had attacked him at Innsbruck returned at Genoa. In the summer of 1901 he made his first visit to Mackinac Island, and in August went on a brief camping trip in Colorado with Hamlin Garland. In 1902 he was again abroad on a trip to Greece, notable for a lonely ride through the Peloponnesus; but he spent much of his time in Greece reading Greek tragedy, and upon his return remarked upon the deeper and clearer understanding of Greek art which came to one under Grecian skies. After giving up his work at the University he made several interesting and important trips, one in the spring of 1905 with Ferdinand Schevill to Arizona. They spent a week at Oraibi among the Hopi Indians, saw the Spring Dance at Walpi, and while there Moody definitely planned "The Great Divide," which was rapidly written soon after his return. In the spring and early summer of 1907 he went with Ridgely Torrence to Tangier, Spain, Italy, and France.

These excursions are all significant of his tastes and of his fondness for physical activity. He was no mere bookish, indoor poet, but found his greatest delight in swimming, bicycling, golf, tennis, walking, mountain-climbing, and such athletic sports as are pursued for the love of the sport and not the applause of the public. Much as he loved literature and art and all the fruits of human culture, exquisite as was his sensitiveness to rhythm and melody and sonorous diction in verse, to interwoven and complex harmonies in music, to color and composition and tactile strain in painting, to imagination and truth in all the arts, his pleasure in the physical world of sense was no less exquisite or keen. Of slightly more than medium height, with a vigorous, well-knit body in which every organ of power and sensation was perfect, he not only theoretically but in fact felt that the perfection of life lies in the realization of all its resources of thought and emotion and bodily sensation. Not in less degree than a Greek of the age of Pericles was he an epicure of life, a voluptuary of the whole range of physical, mental, and spiritual perfections. To recognize this, one had only to look upon his body, sensitive to every delight and exuberant with vitality; to be suddenly fixed by his wonderful eyes, light, clear blue, and shining like large gems because of the sailor-like ruddiness that wind and sun had laid upon his cheek and brow; to hear his eager discourse upon art or life, both of which to him were one. But that his sensitiveness to all that is beautiful was due, not to weakness, but to vigor and health of mind and character, is shown by the unwavering determination with which he put aside softness and ease and lived hardly and barely in order to do his appointed work as poet.

After 1902 he ceased to teach in the University, though the authorities induced him to maintain for some years a nominal connection, in the hope that he might resume his work as a lecturer, even if only occasionally and for brief periods. But although courses were sometimes planned for him, they were always withdrawn before the time to give them arrived. Nothing is more characteristic of the man than the determination with which he pursued his own proper career. President Harper believed so thoroughly in his value to the University that he offered him the full salary of a professor if he would continue to lecture for a single quarter each year. Temptation of this sort and offers of financial assistance from friends he resolutely put aside, preferring to live hardly and poorly for the sake of living independently and doing the work to which he had long since determined to devote all his powers. Relief from the drudgery of teaching came with the publication of the *History of English Literature* which he wrote in collaboration with Robert M. Lovett. This book, like the others which he published to supplement his salary, — chief among them an edition of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* with introduction and notes, and a complete edition of the English and Latin poems of Milton, — was a brilliant and scholarly piece of work, the fruit of years of study and reflection.

There was never a more conscientious teacher than Moody, whether his task was lecturing on English literature or the monotonous grind of theme correction, and seldom a more brilliant and inspiring lecturer. Traditions of his teaching still linger about the University, but even from a child he had thought poetry was his proper function and he gave himself up entirely to his work as soon as it was possible to do so. Conscientious and successful as was his teaching, his heart was never in it. He looked forward eagerly to his vacations and counted the days till the summit of the quarter should be reached and the pleasant slope to the end should begin. In January, 1898, he wrote to a friend, "I started in to-day on another quarter's work at the shop — with vacation and restored consciousness three months away." This was partly because he felt, as all lovers of beauty feel, that the formal teaching of literature has in it something destructive and deadening. When, after his last visit to Greece, I was urging him to return to the University and lecture upon English poetry in the new light on Greek literature which had come to him, he steadily refused to do so, and finally said, "I cannot do it; I feel that at every lecture I slay a poet."

Moody's earlier work as a poet was, like that of Keats and, indeed, many other writers, purely experimental and detached from life. Some of these poems were never published; some were published in the *Harvard Monthly;* some he rewrote; but there were comparatively few which in later years he was willing to see reprinted. To this critical attitude is due, in part, the fact that, though he wrote with ease, the volume of short poems which he published in 1901, containing all he then wished made permanent, is small compared with the output of much less fertile and vigorous artists. The ease with which he wrote may be inferred from a remark he made to me in 1898. He had been reading a revised version of "The Amber Witch," a poem inspired in his undergraduate years by Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and then began to talk of a play he was planning to write in blank verse on a theme suggested by the meteoric glow and disappearance of Schlatter the Faith Healer. Upon my venturing the opinion that it was too late in the history of the world to write plays in anything but prose, he replied that for such a subject he thought blank verse more suitable and that it was easier to write blank verse than prose.

Like the experimental work of most young poets, Moody's was imitative, but he did not even then make himself "the sedulous ape" either of one writer or of many. Traces of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Keats, of Browning, of Rossetti, of William Morris, of Walt Whitman, one may find either in theme, or tone, or rhythm, or, though seldom, in phrasal echo. Of Tennyson there is perhaps not a trace, for he had long been rejected by the critical spirits of the English Club and the *Monthly;* and of Swinburne quite as little, for the Swinburne epidemic, once strong, had spent itself at Harvard the year that Moody entered as a freshman. Specimens, not of his earliest work, but of work which still recalls in some measure the manner of his favorite poets, are the song "My Love is gone into the East," "The Ride to the

Lady," now entitled "The Ride Back," "How the Mead-Slave was Set Free," and the sonnet "Harmonics."

But early as these poems are, it is singular to find in them so little of morbidity, so little of that aimless melancholy which marks the youthful work of most poets. Moreover, there is not one which does not contain some striking example of Moody's individuality and boldness of conception and phrasing. In "The Ride Back," a purely ornamental, self-conscious bit of pre-Raphaelitism of the Morris type, occur such lines as: —

About the dabbled reeds a breeze
Went moaning broken words and dim,

and

Lewd as the palsied lips of hags
The petals in the moon did shake,

and

And songs blown out like thistle seed;

and most wonderful of all is the whole of the fourth stanza from the end. Just as artificial and as literary in its inspiration is "How the Mead-Slave was Set Free," but how characteristically and vividly conceived are the pictures of stanzas two and three and stanza eight, and how true and rare is the observation in the lines: —

> . . . . thrill like happy things
> That flutter from the gray cocoons
> On hedgerows, in your gradual springs!

And who but Moody himself could speak, as he does in "Harmonics," of

> . . . . . such a laddered music, rung on rung,
> As from the patriarch's pillow skyward sprung,
> Crowded with wide-flung wings and feet of fire?

In 1896 came the first poem suggested by his own experience. In May of that year, along with a copy of a poem called "Wilding Flowers," he wrote to his friend Daniel G. Mason: "I send you a poem which I have just written about the Creature I once hinted to you of — a girl who haunted the Symphonies last winter. I hope you will like it, because it is almost the first thing I have done which has been a direct impulse from real life, and you know I have theories about that." This poem, now entitled "Heart's Wild-Flower," is in subject, diction, and melody not altogether without kinship to Rossetti, but the simple and exquisite phrasing, the subtle reticence of youthful adoration, reach a climax of sincerity and individuality in the last six lines. Again, in July of the same year, with a copy of "Dawn Parley," a poem not in the present collection, he writes, "I inclose a reaction on a recent notable experience."

From this time on, much of his poetry was more or less directly suggested by real incidents or situations of his life; and the large body of it which still had an alien origin or inspiration is shot through with transformed emotional images of them. In some instances the later poems go back several years for the experiences they transcribe. Thus "Old Pourquoi," written after 1901, recalls an incident of a walk from Caudebec to Yvetot in August, 1895. "Good Friday Night," suggested by an Eastertide procession at Sorrento in April, 1897, was not completed till the end of the year. The "Road-Hymn for the Start" was sketched in May of the same year, but was not written until later. "Song-Flower and Poppy," written in New York in the spring of 1899, is crowded with recollections of the Italian journeys of 1897. On the other hand, "A Grey Day" and "Gloucester Moors" were written among the scenes they transcribe; and the composition of "The Daguerreotype," the "Ode in Time of Hesitation," "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," "The Quarry," and "The Moon-Moth," followed close upon the incidents which gave them being.

But Moody's poetry, whether due to a direct impulse from life or suggested, like the "Dialogue in Purgatory" and "The Fountain" and "Thammuz," by literature, is notable for its freedom from response to the obvious, the trivial, the merely pretty. This is, no doubt, one reason why, for all his rich and various melody, his wealth of fresh and vivid imagery, his modernity, his worship of beauty and love, his depth of spiritual emotion, he is not popular, is indeed hardly remembered by any except those to whom poetry is not an idle pastime, but a passion; for the idler wants art in all its forms to be obvious, and trivial, and pretty. Moody's themes are often the common themes of poetry: love, patriotism, human suffering, God, and the soul. But he sees them ever from some new angle, he finds in them new significance, he mingles them with unaccustomed but predestined associations. His vision and feeling are not simple, but interwoven with rich threads of reflection and transmuting emotion. Even the oldest theme or image becomes his own, because he has seen and felt it anew. What is there more common than a street song that seizes the heart of the listener and bears it far away? Wordsworth gives it perhaps as simple a rendering as it ever had in poetry. Moody's "Song-Flower and Poppy" shows no more effort at complexity than the "Reverie of Poor Susan"; it is richer in imagery and in meaning, more intense, more significant, just because the street song falls not on the ears of a housemaid but on those of a passionate lover of beauty and of life. All of us, in this day of human brotherhood and sympathy for the poor, have felt that we have, perhaps, more than our share of the good things of life; but who but Moody, watching the spring come up the land, has thought of his fellowmen and written: —

> To be out of the moiling street
> With its swelter and its sin!
> Who has given to me this sweet,
> And given my brother dust to eat?
> And when will his wage come in?

Ages ago old Omar wrote that

> never blows so red
> The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;

and the

> e tumulo fortunataque favilla
> Nascentur violæ

of Persius has been echoed by Shakespeare and by Tennyson; but this pretty conceit, this sweet and pious prayer, found new and deeper significance when Moody wrote of the burial in a common grave of Robert Shaw and his faithful band of negroes:—

> Now limb doth mingle with dissolvèd limb
> In nature's busy old democracy,
> To flush the mountain laurel when she blows
> Sweet by the southern sea,
> And heart with crumbled heart climbs in the rose.

That Moody's poetry does not always reveal its meaning to the careless and casual reader is true; to such perhaps it never reveals itself entirely. This is due to several causes. For one thing, the only types of poetry that are easy to read are the narrative and what may be called the universal lyric. Moody rarely wrote narrative verse, and the little that he did write has, like most of his lyrics, dramatic quality also, and demands that the reader conceive a situation and follow it in all its changing phases. Even Good Friday Night" and "Second Coming," two of the simplest as well as the profoundest and most beautiful of his narrative poems, make large demands upon the imagination and the emotions; and even larger demands are made by "The Death of Eve" and "The Moon-Moth." Poems of other types are even more difficult. How many times have I not heard intelligent persons question what was intended by that marvelous personification of machinery, "The Brute," that vision of the early roseate hopes for economic relief, the grimy present reality, and the final compelling of the Brute to bring the good time on! Insoluble, perhaps, without the hint given by the date, is "The Quarry." Yet even that becomes clear when one remembers that it was then that the beasts of prey gathered to dismember China, and that the attitude and intent of the Eagle were long doubtful.

Another cause of difficulty arises from the quality of Moody's imagination and his inexhaustible store of sensory images. He has few similes and his sense impressions are so specific that they make great demands upon both experience and memory. How many of us think of the fourth stanza of "Gloucester Moors" as anything but a fantastic image? And yet any one who will steadily watch the summer clouds as they sail overhead in a light wind will veritably feel the "velvet plunge and soft upreel" of the steadfast earth. Have you seen

> O'er the grey deep the dories crawl,
> Four-legged, with rowers twain?

Have you noted the "opal heart" of a summer afternoon, seen the "ashen lips" of the western storm, watched "the raindrops dot the sand," and "the shards of day sweep past"? Scarcely a page, certainly not a poem, however short, fails to yield some notable phrasing of a sight, a sound, an odor that gives us a more vivid realization of it than the object itself would give, and leaves us with a permanently greater capacity of enjoyment of such sensations.

Like his imagery, Moody's diction is rich, condensed, packed with meaning. Any one of the poems will furnish abundant instances. "Good Friday Night" is full of them: "twilight circles," "ancient square," "unspiritual," "throned in its hundred candles," "the doll-face, waxen white, flowered out a living dimness," "the odorous hill," "heart-stung." Often, as here, the words themselves are simple and separately not of special beauty, but partly from his native bent, and partly from his loving study of Æschylus and Milton, Moody loved beautiful words for their own sakes, words sonorous, or melodious, or rich in suggestion. The second and third sections of the "Ode in Time of Hesitation," for all their large meaning and their jeweled picturesqueness, are a veritable symphony of rich and melodious words. Of similar character are the speeches of Prometheus in the first act of "The Fire-Bringer."

Moody has, too, especially in his lyrics, the gift of unaccountable magic — of simple phrases which stir the emotions or awaken a sense of significance far beyond the power of the words or the thought. His lyrics, especially the brief lyrics in the poetic dramas, are full of this, the songs of Pandora in "The Fire-Bringer" and those of the Spirits in "The Masque of Judgment":

> Along the earth and up the sky
>   The Fowler spreads his net:
> O soul, what pinions wild and shy
>   Are on thy shoulders set?
> What wings of longing undeterred
> Are native to thee, spirit bird?

Or Raphael's song in *terza rima* of God's interest and pleasure in all his creatures great and small: —

Down curved spaces He may warp
With old planets, long and long;
Where the snail doth tease and carp,
Asking with its jellied prong,
A whole summer he may bide,
Wondrous tiny lives among,
Curious, unsatisfied.

Or, most remarkable of all, the song of the Redeemed Spirits, as they fly past: —

In the wilds of life astray,
Held far from our delight,
Following the cloud by day
And the fire by night,
Came we a desert way.
O Lord, with apples feed us,
With flagons stay!
By Thy still waters lead us!

What resides in those last three lines to make us accept their poor offerings as heavenly food and drink and all the joys that await the Redeemed? I cannot for the life of me tell, any more than I know why an unfathomable fount of sorrow lies in Wordsworth's

Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago;

or why the whole riddle of the universe arises with Shakespeare's

> We are such stuff as dreams are made on,
> And our little life is rounded with a sleep.

That the words all have meanings and associations is true, but the meanings and associations are inadequate to the emotional effect. Is it the rhythm, the harmonic overtones? Is it true that a single note of a violin will set a steel bridge in vibration or shatter a stone building if only the right tone be found?

In such lyrics as these, poetry perhaps makes its nearest approach to pure music. Its effects are those of rhythm, of melody of those wonderful interweavings of present tones with past tones that still linger in the brain, if not in the ear, and form harmonies. Such effects may be produced, as we have seen, almost without reference to any thought or associations conveyed by the words themselves; but they are naturally most powerful and beautiful when joined with beautiful thoughts and associations, as in many of the stanzas of "Song-Flower and Poppy," or in the Song of the Stone Men and Earth Women in the last act of "The Fire-Bringer," or Pandora's songs in the second act, or the song of the Girl in the Prelude to "The Masque of Judgment."

Much of Moody's success in these lyrics, as elsewhere in his poetry, comes from his fearless mastery of diction and of movement. We have already seen, in part, the bold individuality of his sense impressions and of his imagery. Only a master has the sincerity to see things freshly and render fearlessly his vision of them. And in expression Moody is as sincere and fearless as in vision. He gets his idea and the phrase which renders it; and the movement, the rhythm, takes care of itself. This is especially evident in his handling of the long lines of the lyric portion of the epic "Death of Eve" and of the song "I am the Woman." Only a master of English verse could make lines of such length move at all, while to make them run and dance and sparkle with light is a triumphant achievement. The same thing is true of the choral movements in "The Fire-Bringer." These rhythms may lack the elaborately varied structure of Greek choral movements, but it would be difficult to find in English any verse that more satisfactorily recalls the Greek.

Thus far we have spoken mainly of the technical elements of Moody's poetry. More interesting and more important are his ideas. To say that they are new would be the same as saying that they are unfit for poetry. Art never deals, never can deal, with ideas that have not already been associated with powerful human emotions. But Moody's ideas, though familiar and indeed in many cases ancient themes of art, are made new and vital by subjection to his temperament and culture and by association with the elements of his spiritual life. In later years his main themes were social and economic injustice, patriotism, the heart of woman, and the relations of God and the soul, the meaning of human life. To the reconception of all these large issues, he brought the richest intellectual and emotional endowment possessed by any American poet.

Hints have already been given of his classical culture, one of the most important formative forces of his art. The influence of Æschylus is evident in his diction, his music, and his imagery, but most powerful and most evident is the influence of the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. It appears not only in the Prelude to "The Masque of Judgment" and the songs and choruses of "The Fire-Bringer," but probably motived the choice of Thammuz as a subject, though the subject be Biblical, and certainly aided the union of religious mysticism and joy in sensuous life which is the dominant note of all Moody's later work. Indeed the *Bacchæ* seems to have meant even more to Moody than to Shelley, and that is saying much. He was an excellent classical scholar when he went up to Harvard. But for his later and deeper interest in Greek literature he was largely indebted to Trumbull Stickney, whose influence upon him Moody rated high, and whose untimely death affected him greatly. With Stickney he read or reread the whole body of Greek Tragedy in 1902 at Paris.

Moody's knowledge of English literature of all periods and of mediæval French romance has also been indicated. He was equally at home in modern French and German literature; and he had caught the very spirit and austere manner of Dante, as his "Dialogue in Purgatory" witnesses. In the summer of 1894 he was reading Spanish and sketching, as I learn from Mr. Mason. Whether he pursued the study of Spanish literature further, I do not know; but in 1903 he took up painting after an interval of many years, and produced work so true and so well composed that several professional painters urged him to devote himself entirely to painting.

But his culture was not merely classical and artistic. The theory of evolution with all its implications is implicit in "The Menagerie," and, despite an antique cosmology retained for poetical purposes, runs through "The Fire-Bringer" and "The Masque of Judgment." Modernity is, indeed, the note of all his thinking. His dream of the city beautiful as the final work of the Brute is the latest word of sociology; as his dream of leisure and intelligence and self-control and the enjoyment of nature as rights of all men has made "Gloucester Moors" a favorite poem with workers in the slums. His patriotism — passionate and beautiful — derives much of its passion and beauty from his sense of the opinion of mankind, his desire that in the eyes of the whole world his beloved land shall stand up clean and pure and beautiful, shall hold the Philippines for no sordid motives, shall refrain from intervention in the dismemberment of China for no base fear.

Walter Pater has somewhere said that no great political poem can be written while men still care for the issues involved. This seems like a dictum uttered by the way to inclose some special case. Certainly Moody's political poetry — the "Ode in Time of Hesitation," "On a Soldier Fallen in the Philippines," and "The Quarry" — was written and set forth while the public mind was still divided; and however much men then differed as to the actions discussed, no one could deny the beauty, the power, or the lasting significance of the poems. We may all become reconciled to the holding of the islands and the partition of China as inevitable, but we shall never be able to minimize the large moral issues which at the moment were involved or to remain cold to Moody's clear and moving statement of them.

The largest literary plan of Moody's career and, though uncompleted, the fullest expression of his vision of life, is the trilogy which was to consist of "The Fire-Bringer," "The Masque of Judgment," and "The Death of Eve." The sequence of these is subject to the logic of his solution of life, not to the chronology of action or of composition. To be judged fairly, they must be taken not as separate and complete wholes but as members of a trilogy, the final word of which was to be spoken at the end of the last. The trilogy, moreover, being Moody's vision of life as a whole, can hardly be understood without some further reference to his temperament and the influences of his childhood. He was, as we have seen, a pure pagan in his sensitiveness to beauty of all kinds, but he was also temperamentally a mystic, one who, without resort to ascetic austerities, though he may not have felt the divine warmth in his breast, heard the divine music, tasted the divine sweetness, or been surrounded by heavenly odors, at least saw, both in youth and in maturer age, with his physical eyes the habitants of heaven. Such a combination is strange enough, but in addition, Moody was born, as we must remember, in the United States of America about the middle of the nineteenth century. He was therefore born and brought up as a Puritan. Whether the ideals of his childhood came from north or from south, this is true. Much has been written about Puritan and Cavalier in the history of this country, but it is all fallacious; their ideals were, except superficially, the same; you had only to scratch a Cavalier ever so lightly to find below the surface a Puritan in full theological panoply. This early training, these early associations, left an indelible impress upon Moody. His task, as poet, was either to reject one or more of these elements or to unify them; but he could not reject any of them, and his whole nature called for the unification of them. He was not content — few of us are — to make his heart a battleground for his temperament and his training. So he fused his ancient cosmology and theology with his evolutionary theories, recharactered his God, as so many of us have done, and achieved a poetic solution of the universe.

This solution, with the problems which throw it into relief, he set forth in a trilogy of poetic dramas. These dramas contain much of his finest poetry, lyric, reflective, and — what is none too common in poetic drama — dramatic; and besides they exhibit a large and steady increase of strength and control, with no diminution of any of the poet's powers. That Moody was preoccupied with such questions as these dramas discuss, appears in a number of his shorter poems, — in the "Road-Hymn for the Start," in "Good Friday Night," in his patriotic poems, in the experimental and unsatisfactory "Until the Troubling of the Waters," in "Song-Flower and Poppy," and, if we accept "The Ride Back" as symbolic of the soul's return to God, in it also.

All three of the dramas are in large measure symbolic, and should be interpreted and judged as such. Strictly dramatic and subject to the laws of dramatic speech and action they were never intended to be, as was shown in the drama first written and published, "The Masque of Judgment," by the presence of such *dramatis personæ* as the Spirits of the Throne-Lamps, the Lion and the Eagle of the Throne, and Spirits of the Saved and of the Lost; by the predominance of descriptive, expository, and lyric poetry, and by the very title of the drama. The critic may prefer dramatic action to broad oratorio-like movement; but the poet has the right to choose his form and medium and to be judged by his success in that. Strictly speaking, "The Masque of Judgment" is in structure and *personæ* more like a mediæval *mystère* than a masque, but Moody, who was familiar with these forms of drama, chose the term "masque" to indicate the symbolic character of his technique and to justify the large majesty of the action.

The order of the members of the trilogy is at first a little confusing: neither in date of composition nor in theme is chronology regarded. "The Masque of Judgment," ranging in dramatic time from just before the Incarnation of Christ to the Evening of the Day of Judgment, and first in order of composition, is logically the second member of the trilogy. "The Fire-Bringer," dealing with the myth of Prometheus and therefore hardly capable of adjustment to any time scheme of a Christian cosmogony, was second in time of composition, but is logically the first member of the trilogy. The third member of the trilogy, "The Death of Eve," was unfortunately left fragmentary, only the first act having been completed. As these relations have occasioned difficulty to some readers, it may be well to give a brief statement of Moody's plan of the trilogy as a whole, premising that the precise development of the final theme had changed more than once in his conception and might conceivably have changed again.

The central or dominant thought of the trilogy is the inseparableness, and, in a certain sense, the unity of God and man. This thought is set forth in the first member, "The Fire-Bringer," through the reaction on the human race of the effort of Prometheus to make man independent of God; in the second member, "The Masque of Judgment," through a declaration of the consequences to God himself that would inevitably follow his decree for the destruction of mankind; in the third member, "The Death of Eve," it was intended to set forth the impossibility of separation, the complete unity of the Creator and his creation.

Despite the fact that these poems were from the beginning known to be members of an organic plan, each of the two has been interpreted as if it were in itself a complete expression of Moody's thought, instead of a phase of its development. It is to be noted that, although Pandora is a prominent figure in "The Fire-Bringer," and in many ways anticipates the feelings and attitudes finally expressed through Eve, Prometheus is the dominant figure, and the poem closes with a triumphant and somewhat insolent chorus of Young Men just awakened to power and sensual delight. Throughout the second drama, Raphael is the dominant figure. Despite his archangelic nature and his kinship with God as the first of his creatures, his long and watchful care of man has made him love and pardon even man's blindnesses and weaknesses; and torn as his heart is by his love for both God and man, he and Uriel and the Spirits of the Throne-Lamps join in expressing the desolation in Heaven as it becomes evident that the destruction of man involves the annihilation of God also.

The third member of the trilogy was to centre upon Eve, who, being the means of separation of man from God, is the appropriate and necessary means of reconciliation. She, having survived "ages of years," has undergone a new spiritual awakening, and with clearing vision sees that her sin need not have been the final, fatal thing it seemed; that God's creatures live by and within his being and cannot be estranged or divided from him. Seeing this dimly, she is under the compulsion of a great need to return to the place where her defiant thought had originated and there declare her new vision of life. She seeks among her kindred for one with understanding and courage, to accompany her; and being often refused, she accepts finally the companionship of the youngest of her descendants, Jubal, — a lad of spiritual insight, a poet and musician, — and with him sets out to find Cain and take him with her into the lost Paradise for the supreme reconciliation. The acceptance of her command by Cain and the expression by Jubal of the new-found joy of living close the first act in its present form. A concluding lyric, sung by Jubal as he leads the little maid Abdera up to the strong, mysterious city of Cain, was unfortunately never written. The other acts of this part of the trilogy, two in number, were to be diversified by many illuminating incidents, among them the instinctive wandering of the age-stricken Adam back to the Garden, ostensibly following Eve, but really yearning forward to participate in the new and glorious solution of life. In the third act there was to be a song by Eve, the burden of which would be the inseparableness of God and man, during which, as she rises to a clearer and clearer view of the spiritual life, she gently passes from the vision of her beholders; while, delicately symbolizing the permanence and beauty of the earth, Jubal and Abdera draw together with broken words of tenderness.

The full vision of Eve, as has been said, never found lyric expression, but one may find anticipations of its thought, if not of its probably elaborate and jubilant form, in the wonderful song of Pandora, who in so many ways expresses the beauty and power of woman. The poem, beautifully simple in structure and in diction, indicates in its parallel phrasing the identity of the thoughts and desires of God and man.

Pandora (sings)

I stood within the heart of God;
It seems a place that I had known:
(I was blood-sister to the clod,
Blood-brother to the stone.)

I found my love and labor there,
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
My ancient rage, my old despair, —
Yea, all things that were mine.

I saw the spring and summer pass,
The trees grow bare, and winter come;
All was the same as once it was
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
I felt God walk and gaze about;
He spoke; His words seemed held apart
With gladness and with doubt.

"Here is my meat and wine," He said,
"My love, my toil, my ancient care;

Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

"Here are my seasons: winter, spring,
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for; everything
As on my heavenly hills."

Moody's conception of God was not, for all his insistence upon the inseparableness of God and man, pantheistic; indeed, it was not a formal philosophical conception, but a poetical vision incorporating the most diverse elements of culture. It must never be forgotten that in his sensitiveness to beauty and his sense of the eternal value of beauty he was a pagan; by nature also he was a mystic, with a feeling of the reality and nearness of God and of his own capacity for direct vision of Him and communication with Him. These elements of pagan "joy of living" and of mystic ecstasy were helped into union by the influence of Platonism and of the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. God figures ambiguously in his poetry: sometimes as the Puritan God, whom he does not love and in whom he does not believe; sometimes as the no less anthropomorphic God from whom he cannot keep his fellowship and love.

The tremendous part which woman plays in Moody's poetry and in his solution of the problem of life is worthy of special attention. In the first place, there is, as we have already seen, scarcely any hint in Moody's writings of sick and doubtful love, the weak sentimentality which is the main stock in trade of so many poets. This is due to the sanity of his mental and emotional natures, for he was a man of unusual sexual interest and sexual power, and he celebrated love as the universal Mother, the glorious and all-powerful being of whom Lucretius sang. Furthermore, woman, as idealized by him, is a far different creature from the bloodless angel who has been the subject of so many futile songs. Woman, as Moody conceived her, is glorious and wonderful, not because of the lack of human and even special weaknesses, but because of the possession of human and special powers. What he conceives her to be he has set forth in many a poem, but most conspicuously in the Girl's song in the Prelude to "The Masque of Judgment," in the Girl's song on pages 57, 58, of "The Fire-Bringer," in the epic vision of "The Death of Eve," and, above all, in that marvelous outburst of varied melody, "I am the Woman."

Only a word can be said of his work as a writer of prose plays. The impulse to write the two he wrote was imperative and irresistible. They embody important phases of his thought, and they show a power of humor and a capacity for dealing with the homely and familiar as well as the poetical which some critics were disposed to deny to him. They are now generally recognized as among the most encouraging signs of the possibility of an American drama that shall be at once popular, powerful, and worthily conceived and written. Some persons have supposed that Moody was seduced by the phenomenal success of "The Great Divide" into the hasty composition of another play. But, as I have said, he discussed the plan of "The Faith Healer" with me in the autumn of 1898, and even before that he had discussed it with Mr. Mason. That this play was not a popular success was due, I think, to Moody's refusal to use the sensational means of music and an excited crowd at the beginning of the first act necessary to establish the emotional atmosphere which alone could have prepared the audience to receive the theme sympathetically.

But even before this play was staged or even completed, he had definitely determined to return to poetry as his proper lifework. What he might have done had years of vigor been granted him we can in part infer from the increase in beauty and power shown in his latest work. He was growing in vigor and depth of thought, in breadth of vision, in sensitiveness to beauty, and in technical power up to the very time of his fatal attack, in the summer of 1909. Under the care of Harriet C. Brainerd, — for years a constant source of strength and inspiration as his dearest friend, and for a few brief months his devoted partner in a marriage of ideal sweetness and unity of feeling, — he sought vainly for restoration to health and strength, but the end came at Colorado Springs on the seventeenth of October, 1910.

That a man so endowed in body, heart, mind, and soul should be taken away in the very flower of his manhood is a loss to the world; that so strong and sweet a soul is with us here no more is an irreparable loss to those who knew and loved him. But Moody, though he did not finish his work, had lived a life of singular richness and fullness. A strong, as well as a fine spirit, he had never compromised with circumstances or fate, and he could well say at the end, as he said long before in "Song-Flower and Poppy": —

> Heart, we have chosen the better part!
> Save sacred love and sacred art,
> Nothing is good for long.

GLOUCESTER MOORS

And Other Poems

GLOUCESTER MOORS

A MILE behind is Gloucester town
Where the fishing fleets put in,
A mile ahead the land dips down
And the woods and farms begin.
Here, where the moors stretch free
In the high blue afternoon,
Are the marching sun and talking sea,
And the racing winds that wheel and flee
On the flying heels of June.

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,
The wild geranium holds its dew
Long in the boulder's shade.
Wax-red hangs the cup
From the huckleberry boughs,
In barberry bells the grey moths sup,
Or where the choke-cherry lifts high up
Sweet bowls for their carouse.

Over the shelf of the sandy cove
Beach-peas blossom late.

By copse and cliff the swallows rove
Each calling to his mate.
Seaward the sea-gulls go,
And the land-birds all are here;
That green-gold flash was a vireo,
And yonder flame where the marsh-flags grow
Was a scarlet tanager.

This earth is not the steadfast place
We landsmen build upon;
From deep to deep she varies pace,
And while she comes is gone.
Beneath my feet I feel
Her smooth bulk heave and dip;
With velvet plunge and soft upreel
She swings and steadies to her keel
Like a gallant, gallant ship.

These summer clouds she sets for sail,
The sun is her masthead light,
She tows the moon like a pinnace frail
Where her phosphor wake churns bright.
Now hid, now looming clear,
On the face of the dangerous blue
The star fleets tack and wheel and veer,

But on, but on does the old earth steer
As if her port she knew.

God, dear God! Does she know her port,
Though she goes so far about?
Or blind astray, does she make her sport
To brazen and chance it out?
I watched when her captains passed:
She were better captainless.
Men in the cabin, before the mast,
But some were reckless and some aghast,
And some sat gorged at mess.

By her battened hatch I leaned and caught
Sounds from the noisome hold, —
Cursing and sighing of souls distraught
And cries too sad to be told.
Then I strove to go down and see;
But they said, "Thou art not of us!"
I turned to those on the deck with me
And cried, "Give help!" But they said, "Let be:
Our ship sails faster thus."

Jill-o'er-the-ground is purple blue,
Blue is the quaker-maid,

The alder-clump where the brook comes through
Breeds cresses in its shade.
To be out of the moiling street
With its swelter and its sin!
Who has given to me this sweet,
And given my brother dust to eat?
And when will his wage come in?

Scattering wide or blown in ranks,
Yellow and white and brown,
Boats and boats from the fishing banks
Come home to Gloucester town.
There is cash to purse and spend,
There are wives to be embraced,
Hearts to borrow and hearts to lend,
And hearts to take and keep to the end, —
O little sails, make haste!

But thou, vast outbound ship of souls,
What harbor town for thee?
What shapes, when thy arriving tolls,
Shall crowd the banks to see?
Shall all the happy shipmates then
Stand singing brotherly?
Or shall a haggard ruthless few

Warp her over and bring her to,
While the many broken souls of men
Fester down in the slaver's pen,
And nothing to say or do?

GOOD FRIDAY NIGHT

At last the bird that sang so long
In twilight circles, hushed his song:
Above the ancient square
The stars came here and there.

Good Friday night! Some hearts were bowed,
But some amid the waiting crowd
Because of too much youth
Felt not that mystic ruth;

And of these hearts my heart was one:
Nor when beneath the arch of stone
With dirge and candle flame
The cross of passion came,

Did my glad spirit feel reproof,
Though on the awful tree aloof,
Unspiritual, dead,
Drooped the ensanguined Head.

To one who stood where myrtles made
A little space of deeper shade

(As I could half descry,
A stranger, even as I),

I said, "These youths who bear along
The symbols of their Saviour's wrong,
The spear, the garment torn,
The flaggel, and the thorn, —

"Why do they make this mummery?
Would not a brave man gladly die
For a much smaller thing
Than to be Christ and king?"

He answered nothing, and I turned.
Throned in its hundred candles burned
The jeweled eidolon
Of her who bore the Son.

The crowd was prostrate; still, I felt
No shame until the stranger knelt;
Then not to kneel, almost
Seemed like a vulgar boast.

I knelt. The doll-face, waxen white,
Flowered out a living dimness; bright

Dawned the dear mortal grace
Of my own mother's face.

When we were risen up, the street
Was vacant; all the air hung sweet
With lemon-flowers; and soon
The sky would hold the moon.

More silently than new-found friends
To whom much silence makes amends
For the much babble vain
While yet their lives were twain,

We walked along the odorous hill.
The light was little yet; his will
I could not see to trace
Upon his form or face.

So when aloft the gold moon broke,
I cried, heart-stung. As one who woke
He turned unto my cries
The anguish of his eyes.

"Friend! Master!" I cried falteringly,
"Thou seest the thing they make of thee.

Oh, by the light divine
My mother shares with thine,

"I beg that I may lay my head
Upon thy shoulder and be fed
With thoughts of brotherhood!"
So through the odorous wood,

More silently than friends new-found
We walked. At the first meadow bound
His figure ashen-stoled
Sank in the moon's broad gold.

ROAD-HYMN FOR THE START

Leave the early bells at chime,
Leave the kindled hearth to blaze,
Leave the trellised panes where children linger out
the waking-time,
Leave the forms of sons and fathers trudging
through the misty ways,
Leave the sounds of mothers taking up their sweet
laborious days.

Pass them by! even while our soul
Yearns to them with keen distress.
Unto them a part is given; we will strive to see the
whole.
Dear shall be the banquet table where their singing spirits press;
Dearer be our sacred hunger, and our pilgrim
loneliness.

We have felt the ancient swaying
Of the earth before the sun,
On the darkened marge of midnight heard sidereal
rivers playing;

Rash it was to bathe our souls there, but we plunged and all was done.
That is lives and lives behind us — lo, our journey is begun!

Careless where our face is set,
Let us take the open way.
What we are no tongue has told us: Errand-goers who forget?
Soldiers heedless of their harry? Pilgrim people gone astray?
We have heard a voice cry "Wander!" That was all we heard it say.

Ask no more: 't is much, 't is much!
Down the road the day-star calls;
Touched with change in the wide heavens, like a leaf the frost winds touch,
Flames the failing moon a moment, ere it shrivels white and falls;
Hid aloft, a wild throat holdeth sweet and sweeter intervals.

Leave him still to ease in song
Half his little heart's unrest:

Speech is his, but we may journey toward the life
for which we long.
God, who gives the bird its anguish, maketh nothing manifest,
But upon our lifted foreheads pours the boon of
endless quest.

AN ODE IN TIME OF HESITATION

(After seeing at Boston the statue of Robert Gould Shaw, killed while storming Fort Wagner, July 18, 1863, at the head of the first enlisted negro regiment, the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts.)

I

Before the solemn bronze Saint Gaudens made
To thrill the heedless passer's heart with awe,
And set here in the city's talk and trade
To the good memory of Robert Shaw,
This bright March morn I stand,
And hear the distant spring come up the land;
Knowing that what I hear is not unheard
Of this boy soldier and his negro band,
For all their gaze is fixed so stern ahead,
For all the fatal rhythm of their tread.
The land they died to save from death and shame
Trembles and waits, hearing the spring's great name,
And by her pangs these resolute ghosts are stirred.

II

Through street and mall the tides of people go
Heedless; the trees upon the Common show
No hint of green; but to my listening heart
The still earth doth impart
Assurance of her jubilant emprise,
And it is clear to my long-searching eyes
That love at last has might upon the skies.
The ice is runneled on the little pond;
A telltale patter drips from off the trees;
The air is touched with southland spiceries,
As if but yesterday it tossed the frond
Of pendant mosses where the live-oaks grow
Beyond Virginia and the Carolines,
Or had its will among the fruits and vines
Of aromatic isles asleep beyond
Florida and the Gulf of Mexico.

III

Soon shall the Cape Ann children shout in glee,
Spying the arbutus, spring's dear recluse;
Hill lads at dawn shall hearken the wild goose
Go honking northward over Tennessee;
West from Oswego to Sault Sainte-Marie,

And on to where the Pictured Rocks are hung,
And yonder where, gigantic, wilful, young,
Chicago sitteth at the northwest gates,
With restless violent hands and casual tongue
Moulding her mighty fates,
The Lakes shall robe them in ethereal sheen;
And like a larger sea, the vital green
Of springing wheat shall vastly be outflung
Over Dakota and the prairie states.
By desert people immemorial
On Arizonan mesas shall be done
Dim rites unto the thunder and the sun;
Nor shall the primal gods lack sacrifice
More splendid, when the white Sierras call
Unto the Rockies straightway to arise
And dance before the unveiled ark of the year,
Sounding their windy cedars as for shawms,
Unrolling rivers clear
For flutter of broad phylacteries;
While Shasta signals to Alaskan seas
That watch old sluggish glaciers downward creep
To fling their icebergs thundering from the steep,
And Mariposa through the purple calms
Gazes at far Hawaii crowned with palms
Where East and West are met, —

A rich seal on the ocean's bosom set
To say that East and West are twain,
With different loss and gain:
The Lord hath sundered them; let them be sundered yet.

IV

Alas! what sounds are these that come
Sullenly over the Pacific seas, —
Sounds of ignoble battle, striking dumb
The season's half-awakened ecstasies?
Must I be humble, then,
Now when my heart hath need of pride?
Wild love falls on me from these sculptured men;
By loving much the land for which they died
I would be justified.
My spirit was away on pinions wide
To soothe in praise of her its passionate mood
And ease it of its ache of gratitude.
Too sorely heavy is the debt they lay
On me and the companions of my day.
I would remember now
My country's goodliness, make sweet her name.
Alas! what shade art thou
Of sorrow or of blame

Liftest the lyric leafage from her brow,
And pointest a slow finger at her shame?

V

Lies! lies! It cannot be! The wars we wage
Are noble, and our battles still are won
By justice for us, ere we lift the gage.
We have not sold our loftiest heritage.
The proud republic hath not stooped to cheat
And scramble in the market-place of war;
Her forehead weareth yet its solemn star.
Here is her witness: this, her perfect son,
This delicate and proud New England soul
Who leads despisèd men, with just-unshackled feet,
Up the large ways where death and glory meet,
To show all peoples that our shame is done,
That once more we are clean and spirit-whole.

VI

Crouched in the sea fog on the moaning sand
All night he lay, speaking some simple word
From hour to hour to the slow minds that heard,
Holding each poor life gently in his hand
And breathing on the base rejected clay
Till each dark face shone mystical and grand

Against the breaking day;
And lo, the shard the potter cast away
Was grown a fiery chalice crystal-fine
Fulfilled of the divine
Great wine of battle wrath by God's ring-finger stirred.
Then upward, where the shadowy bastion loomed
Huge on the mountain in the wet sea light,
Whence now, and now, infernal flowerage bloomed,
Bloomed, burst, and scattered down its deadly seed, —
They swept, and died like freemen on the height,
Like freemen, and like men of noble breed;
And when the battle fell away at night
By hasty and contemptuous hands were thrust
Obscurely in a common grave with him
The fair-haired keeper of their love and trust.
Now limb doth mingle with dissolvèd limb
In nature's busy old democracy
To flush the mountain laurel when she blows
Sweet by the southern sea,
And heart with crumbled heart climbs in the rose: —
The untaught hearts with the high heart that knew

This mountain fortress for no earthly hold
Of temporal quarrel, but the bastion old
Of spiritual wrong,
Built by an unjust nation sheer and strong,
Expugnable but by a nation's rue
And bowing down before that equal shrine
By all men held divine,
Whereof his band and he were the most holy sign.

VII

O bitter, bitter shade!
Wilt thou not put the scorn
And instant tragic question from thine eye?
Do thy dark brows yet crave
That swift and angry stave —
Unmeet for this desirous morn —
That I have striven, striven to evade?
Gazing on him, must I not deem they err
Whose careless lips in street and shop aver
As common tidings, deeds to make his cheek
Flush from the bronze, and his dead throat to speak?
Surely some elder singer would arise,
Whose harp hath leave to threaten and to mourn
Above this people when they go astray.

Is Whitman, the strong spirit, overworn?
Has Whittier put his yearning wrath away?
I will not and I dare not yet believe!
Though furtively the sunlight seems to grieve,
And the spring-laden breeze
Out of the gladdening west is sinister
With sounds of nameless battle overseas;
Though when we turn and question in suspense
If these things be indeed after these ways,
And what things are to follow after these,
Our fluent men of place and consequence
Fumble and fill their mouths with hollow phrase,
Or for the end-all of deep arguments
Intone their dull commercial liturgies —
I dare not yet believe! My ears are shut!
I will not hear the thin satiric praise
And muffled laughter of our enemies,
Bidding us never sheathe our valiant sword
Till we have changed our birthright for a gourd
Of wild pulse stolen from a barbarian's hut;
Showing how wise it is to cast away
The symbols of our spiritual sway,
That so our hands with better ease
May wield the driver's whip and grasp the jailer's keys.

VIII

Was it for this our fathers kept the law?
This crown shall crown their struggle and their ruth?
Are we the eagle nation Milton saw
Mewing its mighty youth,
Soon to possess the mountain winds of truth,
And be a swift familiar of the sun
Where aye before God's face his trumpets run?
Or have we but the talons and the maw,
And for the abject likeness of our heart
Shall some less lordly bird be set apart? —
Some gross-billed wader where the swamps are fat?
Some gorger in the sun? Some prowler with the bat?

IX

Ah no!
We have not fallen so.
We are our fathers' sons: let those who lead us know!
'T was only yesterday sick Cuba's cry
Came up the tropic wind, "Now help us, for we die!"

Then Alabama heard,
And rising, pale, to Maine and Idaho
Shouted a burning word.
Proud state with proud impassioned state conferred,
And at the lifting of a hand sprang forth,
East, west, and south, and north,
Beautiful armies. Oh, by the sweet blood and young
Shed on the awful hill slope at San Juan,
By the unforgotten names of eager boys
Who might have tasted girls' love and been stung
With the old mystic joys
And starry griefs, now the spring nights come on,
But that the heart of youth is generous, —
We charge you, ye who lead us,
Breathe on their chivalry no hint of stain!
Turn not their new-world victories to gain!
One least leaf plucked for chaffer from the bays
Of their dear praise,
One jot of their pure conquest put to hire,
The implacable republic will require;
With clamor, in the glare and gaze of noon,
Or subtly, coming as a thief at night,
But surely, very surely, slow or soon

That insult deep we deeply will requite.
Tempt not our weakness, our cupidity!
For save we let the island men go free,
Those baffled and dislaureled ghosts
Will curse us from the lamentable coasts
Where walk the frustrate dead.
The cup of trembling shall be drainèd quite,
Eaten the sour bread of astonishment,
With ashes of the hearth shall be made white
Our hair, and wailing shall be in the tent;
Then on your guiltier head
Shall our intolerable self-disdain
Wreak suddenly its anger and its pain;
For manifest in that disastrous light
We shall discern the right
And do it, tardily. — O ye who lead,
Take heed!
Blindness we may forgive, but baseness we will
smite.

1900.

THE QUARRY

BETWEEN the rice swamps and the fields of tea
I met a sacred elephant, snow-white.
Upon his back a huge pagoda towered
Full of brass gods and food of sacrifice.
Upon his forehead sat a golden throne,
The massy metal twisted into shapes
Grotesque, antediluvian, such as move
In myth or have their broken images
Sealed in the stony middle of the hills.
A peacock spread his thousand dyes to screen
The yellow sunlight from the head of one
Who sat upon the throne, clad stiff with gems,
Heirlooms of dynasties of buried kings, —
Himself the likeness of a buried king,
With frozen gesture and unfocused eyes.
The trappings of the beast were over-scrawled
With broideries — sea-shapes and flying things,
Fan-trees and dwarfed nodosities of pine,
Mixed with old alphabets, and faded lore
Fallen from ecstatic mouths before the Flood,

Or gathered by the daughters when they walked
Eastward in Eden with the Sons of God
Whom love and the deep moon made garrulous.
Between the carven tusks his trunk hung dead;
Blind as the eyes of pearl in Buddha's brow
His beaded eyes stared thwart upon the road;
And feebler than the doting knees of eld,
His joints, of size to swing the builder's crane
Across the war-walls of the Anakim,
Made vain and shaken haste. Good need was his
To hasten: panting, foaming, on the slot
Came many brutes of prey, their several hates
Laid by until the sharing of the spoil.
Just as they gathered stomach for the leap,
The sun was darkened, and wide-balanced wings
Beat downward on the trade-wind from the sea.
A wheel of shadow sped along the fields
And o'er the dreaming cities. Suddenly
My heart misgave me, and I cried aloud,
"Alas! What dost thou here? What dost *thou* here?"
The great beasts and the little halted sharp,
Eyed the grand circler, doubting his intent.
Straightway the wind flawed and he came about,
Stooping to take the vanward of the pack;

Then turned, between the chasers and the chased,
Crying a word I could not understand, —
But stiller-tongued, with eyes somewhat askance,
They settled to the slot and disappeared.

1900.

ON A SOLDIER FALLEN IN THE PHILIPPINES

STREETS of the roaring town,
Hush for him, hush, be still!
He comes, who was stricken down
Doing the word of our will.
Hush! Let him have his state,
Give him his soldier's crown.
The grists of trade can wait
Their grinding at the mill,
But he cannot wait for his honor, now the trumpet
has been blown;
Wreathe pride now for his granite brow, lay love
on his breast of stone.

Toll! Let the great bells toll
Till the clashing air is dim.
Did we wrong this parted soul?
We will make up it to him.
Toll! Let him never guess
What work we set him to.
Laurel, laurel, yes;
He did what we bade him do.

Praise, and never a whispered hint but the fight
he fought was good;
Never a word that the blood on his sword was
his country's own heart's-blood.

A flag for the soldier's bier
Who dies that his land may live;
O, banners, banners here,
That he doubt not nor misgive!
That he heed not from the tomb
The evil days draw near
When the nation, robed in gloom,
With its faithless past shall strive.
Let him never dream that his bullet's scream
went wide of its island mark,
Home to the heart of his darling land where she
stumbled and sinned in the dark.

UNTIL THE TROUBLING OF THE WATERS

Two hours, two hours: God give me strength
for it!
He who has given so much strength to me
And nothing to my child, must give to-day
What more I need to try and save my child
And get for him the life I owe to him.
To think that I may get it for him now,
Before he knows how much he might have missed
That other boys have got! The bitterest thought
Of all that plagued me when he came was this,
How some day he would see the difference,
And drag himself to me with puzzled eyes
To ask me why it was. He would have been
Cruel enough to do it, knowing not
That was the question my rebellious heart
Cried over and over one whole year to God,
And got no answer and no help at all.
If he had asked me, what could I have said?
What single word could I have found to say
To hide me from his searching, puzzled gaze?

Some coward thing at best, never the truth;
The truth I never could have told him. No,
I never could have said, "God gave you me
To fashion you a body, right and strong,
With sturdy little limbs and chest and neck
For fun and fighting with your little mates,
Great feats and voyages in the breathless world
Of out-of-doors, — He gave you me for this,
And I was such a bungler, that is all!"
O, the old lie — that thought was not the worst.
I never have been truthful with myself.
For by the door where lurked one ghostly thought
I stood with crazy hands to thrust it back
If it should dare to peep and whisper out
Unbearable things about me, hearing which
The women passing in the streets would turn
To pity me and scold me with their eyes,
Who was so bad a mother and so slow
To learn to help God do his wonder in her
That she — O my sweet baby! It was not
The fear that you would see the difference
Between you and the other boys and girls;
No, no, it was the dimmer, wilder fear,
That you might never see it, never look
Out of your tiny baby-house of mind,

But sit your life through, quiet in the dark,
Smiling and nodding at what was not there!
A foolish fear: God could not punish so.
Yet until yesterday I thought He would.
My soul was always cowering at the blow
I saw suspended, ready to be dealt
The moment that I showed my fear too much.
Therefore I hid it from Him all I could,
And only stole a shaking glance at it
Sometimes in the dead minutes before dawn
When He forgets to watch. Till yesterday.
For yesterday was wonderful and strange
From the beginning. When I wakened first
And looked out at the window, the last snow
Was gone from earth; about the apple-trees
Hung a faint mist of bloom; small sudden green
Had run and spread and rippled everywhere
Over the fields; and in the level sun
Walked something like a presence and a power,
Uttering hopes and loving-kindnesses
To all the world, but chiefly unto me.
It walked before me when I went to work,
And all day long the noises of the mill
Were spun upon a core of golden sound,
Half-spoken words and interrupted songs

Of blessed promise, meant for all the world,
But most for me, because I suffered most.
The shooting spindles, the smooth-humming wheels,
The rocking webs, seemed toiling to some end
Beneficent and human known to them,
And duly brought to pass in power and love.
The faces of the girls and men at work
Met mine with intense greeting, veiled at once
As if they knew a secret they must keep
For fear the joy would harm me if they told
Before some inkling filtered to my mind
In roundabout ways. When the day's work was done
There lay a special silence on the fields;
And, as I passed, the bushes and the trees,
The very ruts and puddles of the road
Spoke to each other, saying it was she,
The happy woman, the elected one,
The vessel of strange mercy and the sign
Of many loving wonders done in Heaven
To help the piteous earth.

At last I stopped
And looked about me in sheer wonderment.

What did it mean? What did they want with me?
What was the matter with the evening now
That it was just as bound to make me glad
As morning and the live-long day had been?
Me, who had quite forgot what gladness was,
Who had no right to anything but toil,
And food and sleep for strength to toil again,
And that fierce frightened anguish of my love
For the poor little spirit I had wronged
With life that was no life. What had befallen
Since yesterday? No need to stop and ask!
Back there in the dark places of my mind
Where I had thrust it, fearing to believe
An unbelievable mercy, shone the news
Told by the village neighbors coming home
Last night from the great city, of a man
Arisen, like the first evangelists,
With power to heal the bodies of the sick,
In testimony of his master Christ,
Who heals the soul when it is sick with sin.
Could such a thing be true in these hard days?
Was help still sent in such a way as that?
No, no! I did not dare to think of it,
Feeling what weakness and despair would come
After the crazy hope broke under me.

I turned and started homeward, faster now,
But never fast enough to leave behind
The voices and the troubled happiness
That still kept mounting, mounting like a sea,
And singing far-off like a rush of wings.
Far down the road a yellow spot of light
Shone from my cottage window, rayless yet,
Where the last sunset crimson caught the panes.
Alice had lit the lamp before she went;
Her day of pity and unmirthful play
Was over, and her young heart free to live
Until to-morrow brought her nursing-task
Again, and made her feel how dark and still
That life could be to others which to her
Was full of dreams that beckoned, reaching hands,
And thrilling invitations young girls hear.
My boy was sleeping, little mind and frame
More tired just lying there awake two hours
Than with a whole day's romp he should have been.
He would not know his mother had come home;
But after supper I would sit awhile
Beside his bed, and let my heart have time
For that worst love that stabs and breaks and kills.

This I thought over to myself by rote
And habit, but I could not feel my thoughts;
For still that dim unmeaning happiness
Kept mounting, mounting round me like a sea,
And singing inward like a wind of wings.

Before I lifted up the latch, I knew.
I felt no fear; the One who waited there
In the low lamplight by the bed, had come
Because I was his sister and in need.
My word had got to Him somehow at last,
And He had come to help me or to tell
Where help was to be found. It was not strange.
Strange only He had stayed away so long;
But that should be forgotten — He was here.
I pushed the door wide open and looked in.
He had been kneeling by the bed, and now,
Half-risen, kissed my boy upon the lips,
Then turned and smiled and pointed with his
hand.
I must have fallen on the threshold stone,
For I remember that I felt, not saw,
The resurrection glory and the peace
Shed from his face and raiment as He went
Out by the door into the evening street.

But when I looked, the place about the bed
Was yet all bathed in light, and in the midst
My boy lay changed, — no longer clothed upon
With scraps and shreds of life, but like the child
Of some most fortunate mother. In a breath
The image faded. There he lay again
The same as always; and the light was gone.
I sank with moans and cries beside the bed.
The cruelty, O Christ, the cruelty!
To come at last and then to go like that,
Leaving the darkness deeper than before!
Then, though I heard no sound, I grew aware
Of some one standing by the open door
Among the dry vines rustling in the porch.
My heart laughed suddenly. He had come back!
He had come back to make the vision true.
He had not meant to mock me: God was God,
And Christ was Christ; there was no falsehood there.
I heard a quiet footstep cross the room
And felt a hand laid gently on my hair, —
A human hand, worn hard by daily toil,
Heavy with life-long struggle after bread.
Alice's father. The kind homely voice
Had in it such strange music that I dreamed

Perhaps it was the Other speaking in him,
Because his own bright form had made me swoon
With its too much of glory. What he brought
Was news as good as ever heavenly lips
Had the dear right to utter. He had been
All day among the crowds of curious folk
From the great city and the country-side
Gathered to watch the Healer do his work
Of mercy on the sick and halt and blind,
And with his very eyes had seen such things
As awestruck men had witnessed long ago
In Galilee, and writ of in the Book.
To-morrow morning he would take me there
If I had strength and courage to believe.
It might be there was hope; he could not say,
But knew what he had seen. When he was gone
I lay for hours, letting the solemn waves
Thundering joy go over and over me.

Just before midnight baby fretted, woke;
He never yet has slept a whole night through
Without his food and petting. As I sat
Feeding and petting him and singing soft,
I felt a jealousy begin to ache
And worry at my heartstrings, hushing down

The gladness. Jealousy of what or whom?
I hardly knew, or could not put in words;
At least it seemed too foolish and too wrong
When said, and so I shut the thought away.
Only, next minute, it came stealing back.
After the change, would my boy be the same
As this one? Would he be my boy at all,
And not another's — his who gave the life
I could not give, or did not anyhow?
How could I look in his new eyes to claim
The whole of him, the body and the breath,
When some one not his mother, a strange man,
Had clothed him in that beauty of the flesh —
Perhaps (for who could know?), perhaps, by some
Hateful disfiguring miracle, had even
Transformed his spirit to a better one,
Better, but not the same I prayed for him
Down out of Heaven through the sleepless
 nights, —
The best that God would send to such as me.
I tried to strangle back the wicked pain;
Fancied him changed and tried to love him so.
No use; it was another, not my child,
Not my frail, broken, priceless little one,
My cup of anguish, and my trembling star

Hung small and sad and sweet above the earth,
So sure to fall but for my cherishing!

When he had dropped asleep again, I rose
And wrestled with the sinful selfishness,
The dark injustice, the unnatural pain.
Fevered at last with pacing to and fro,
I raised the bedroom window and leaned out.
The white moon, low behind the sycamores,
Silvered the silent country; not a voice
Of all the myriads summer moves to sing
Had yet awakened; in the level moon
Walked that same presence I had heard at dawn
Uttering hopes and loving-kindnesses,
But now, dispirited and reticent,
It walked the moonlight like a homeless thing.
O, how to cleanse me of the cowardice!
How to be just! Was I a mother, then,
A mother, and not love her child as well
As her own covetous and morbid love?
Was it for this the Comforter had come,
Smiling at me and pointing with his hand?
— What had He meant to have me think or do,
Smiling and pointing?

All at once I saw
A way to save my darling from myself
And make atonement for my grudging love!
Under the sycamores and up the hill
And down across the river, the wet road
Went stretching cityward, silvered in the moon.
I who had shrunk from sacrifice, even I,
Who had refused God's blessing for my boy,
Would take him in my arms and carry him
Up to the altar of the miracle.
I would not wait for daylight, nor the help
Of any human friendship; I alone,
Through the still miles of country, I alone,
Only my arms to shield him and my feet
To bear him: he should have no one to thank
But me for that. I knew the way was long,
But knew strength would be given. So I came.
Soon the stars failed; the late moon faded too:
I think my heart had sucked their beams from them
To build more blue amid the murky night
Its own miraculous day. From creeks and fields
The fog climbed slowly, blotted out the road;
And hid the signposts telling of the town;
After a while rain fell, with sleet and snow.

What did I care? Baby was snug and dry.
Some day, when I was telling him of this,
He would but hug me closer, hearing how
The night conspired against us. Better hard
Than easy, then: I almost felt regret
My body was so capable and strong
To do its errand. Honeyed drop by drop,
The ghostly jealousy, loosening at my breast,
Distilled into a dew of quiet tears
And fell with splash of music in the wells
And on the hidden rivers of my soul.

The hardest part was coming through the town.
The country, even when it hindered most,
Seemed conscious of the thing I went to find.
The rocks and bushes looming through the mist
Questioned and acquiesced and understood;
The trees and streams believed; the wind and rain,
Even they, for all their temper, had some words
Of faith and comfort. But the glaring streets,
The dizzy traffic, the piled merchandise,
The giant buildings swarming with fierce life —
Cared nothing for me. They had never heard
Of me nor of my business. When I asked

My way, a shade of pity or contempt
Showed through men's kindness — for they all
were kind.
Daunted and chilled and very sick at heart,
I walked the endless pavements. But at last
The streets grew quieter; the houses seemed
As if they might be homes where people lived;
Then came the factories and cottages,
And all was well again. Much more than well,
For many sick and broken went my way,
Alone or helped along by loving hands;
And from a thousand eyes the famished hope
Looked out at mine — wild, patient, querulous,
But always hope and hope, a thousand tongues
Speaking one word in many languages.

In two hours He will come, they say, will stand
There on the steps, above the waiting crowd,
And touch with healing hands whoever asks
Believingly, in spirit and in truth.
Can such a mercy be, in these hard days?
Is help still sent in such a way as that?
Christ, I believe; pity my unbelief!

JETSAM

I WONDER can this be the world it was
At sunset? I remember the sky fell
Green as pale meadows, at the long street-ends,
But overhead the smoke-wrack hugged the roofs
As if to shut the city from God's eyes
Till dawn should quench the laughter and the lights.
Beneath the gas flare stolid faces passed,
Too dull for sin; old loosened lips set hard
To drain the stale lees from the cup of sense;
Or if a young face yearned from out the mist
Made by its own bright hair, the eyes were wan
With desolate fore-knowledge of the end.
My life lay waste about me: as I walked,
From the gross dark of unfrequented streets
The face of my own youth peered forth at me,
Struck white with pity at the thing I was;
And globed in ghostly fire, thrice-virginal,
With lifted face star-strong, went one who sang
Lost verses from my youth's gold canticle.
Out of the void dark came my face and hers

One vivid moment — then the street was there;
Bloat shapes and mean eyes blotted the sear dusk;
And in the curtained window of a house
Whence sin reeked on the night, a shameful head
Was silhouetted black as Satan's face
Against eternal fires. I stumbled on
Down the dark slope that reaches riverward,
Stretching blind hands to find the throat of God
And crush Him in his lies. The river lay
Coiled in its factory filth and few lean trees.
All was too hateful — I could not die there!
I whom the Spring had strained unto her breast,
Whose lips had felt the wet vague lips of dawn.
So under the thin willows' leprous shade
And through the tangled ranks of riverweed
I pushed — till lo, God heard me! I came forth
Where, 'neath the shoreless hush of region light,
Through a new world, undreamed of, undesired,
Beyond imagining of man's weary heart,
Far to the white marge of the wondering sea
This still plain widens, and this moon rains down
Insufferable ecstasy of peace.

My heart is man's heart, strong to bear this night's

Unspeakable affliction of mute love
That crazes lesser things. The rocks and clods
Dissemble, feign a busy intercourse;
The bushes deal in shadowy subterfuge,
Lurk dull, dart spiteful out, make heartless signs,
Utter awestricken purpose of no sense, —
But I walk quiet, crush aside the hands
Stretched furtively to drag me madmen's ways.
I know the thing they suffer, and the tricks
They must be at to help themselves endure.
I would not be too boastful; I am weak,
Too weak to put aside the utter ache
Of this lone splendor long enough to see
Whether the moon is still her white strange self
Or something whiter, stranger, even the face
Which by the changed face of my risen youth
Sang, globed in fire, her golden canticle.
I dare not look again; another gaze
Might drive me to the wavering coppice there,
Where bat-winged madness brushed me, the wild laugh
Of naked nature crashed across my blood.
So rank it was with earthy presences,
Faun-shapes in goatish dance, young witches' eyes
Slanting deep invitation, whinnying calls

Ambiguous, shocks and whirlwinds of wild mirth, —
They had undone me in the darkness there,
But that within me, smiting through my lids
Lowered to shut in the thick whirl of sense,
The dumb light ached and rummaged, and without,
The soaring splendor summoned me aloud
To leave the low dank thickets of the flesh
Where man meets beast and makes his lair with him,
For spirit reaches of the strenuous vast,
Where stalwart stars reap grain to make the bread
God breaketh at his tables and is glad.
I came out in the moonlight cleansed and strong,
And gazed up at the lyric face to see
All sweetness tasted of in earthen cups
Ere it be dashed and spilled, all radiance flung
Beyond experience, every benison dream,
Treasured and mystically crescent there.

O, who will shield me from her? Who will place
A veil between me and the fierce in-throng
Of her inexorable benedicite?
See, I have loved her well and been with her!

Through tragic twilights when the stricken sea
Groveled with fear; or when she made her throne
In imminent cities built of gorgeous winds
And paved with lightnings; or when the sobering stars
Would lead her home 'mid wealth of plundered May
Along the violet slopes of evensong.
Of all the sights that starred the dreamy year,
For me one sight stood peerless and apart:
Bright rivers tacit; low hills prone and dumb;
Forests that hushed their tiniest voice to hear;
Skies for the unutterable advent robed
In purple like the opening iris buds;
And by some lone expectant pool, one tree
Whose grey boughs shivered with excess of awe,—
As with preluding gush of amber light,
And herald trumpets softly lifted through,
Across the palpitant horizon marge
Crocus-filleted came the singing moon.
Out of her changing lights I wove my youth
A place to dwell in, sweet and spiritual,
And all the bitter years of my exile
My heart has called afar off unto her.
Lo, after many days love finds its own!

The futile adorations, the waste tears,
The hymns that fluttered low in the false dawn,
She has uptreasured as a lover's gifts;
They are the mystic garment that she wears
Against the bridal, and the crocus flowers
She twined her brow with at the going forth;
They are the burden of the song she made
In coming through the quiet fields of space,
And breathe between her passion-parted lips
Calling me out along the flowering road
Which summers through the dimness of the sea.

Hark, where the deep feels round its thousand shores
To find remembered respite, and far drawn
Through weed-strewn shelves and crannies of the coast
The myriad silence yearns to myriad speech.
O sea that yearns a day, shall thy tongues be
So eloquent, and heart, shall all thy tongues
Be dumb to speak thy longing? Say I hold
Life as a broken jewel in my hand,
And fain would buy a little love with it
For comfort, say I fain would make it shine
Once in remembering eyes ere it be dust, —

Were life not worthy spent? Then what of this,
When all my spirit hungers to repay
The beauty that has drenched my soul with
peace?
Once at a simple turning of the way
I met God walking; and although the dawn
Was large behind Him, and the morning stars
Circled and sang about his face as birds
About the fieldward morning cottager,
My coward heart said faintly, "Let us haste!
Day grows and it is far to market-town."
Once where I lay in darkness after fight,
Sore smitten, thrilled a little thread of song
Searching and searching at my muffled sense
Until it shook sweet pangs through all my blood,
And I beheld one globed in ghostly fire
Singing, star-strong, her golden canticle;
And her mouth sang, "The hosts of Hate roll
past,
A dance of dust motes in the sliding sun;
Love's battle comes on the wide wings of storm,
From east to west one legion! Wilt thou strive?"
Then, since the splendor of her sword-bright gaze
Was heavy on me with yearning and with scorn
My sick heart muttered, "Yea, the little strife,

Yet see, the grievous wounds! I fain would sleep."
O heart, shalt thou not once be strong to go
Where all sweet throats are calling, once be brave
To slake with deed thy dumbness? Let us go
The path her singing face looms low to point,
Pendulous, blanched with longing, shedding flame
Of silver on the brown grope of the flood;
For all my spirit's soilure is put by
And all my body's soilure, lacking now
But the last lustral sacrament of death
To make me clean for those near-searching eyes
That question yonder whether all be well,
And pause a little ere they dare rejoice.

Question and be thou answered, passionate face!
For I am worthy, worthy now at last
After so long unworth; strong now at last
To give myself to beauty and be saved;
Now, being man, to give myself to thee,
As once the tumult of my boyish heart
Companioned thee with rapture through the world,
Forth from a land whereof no poet's lip
Made mention how the leas were lily-sprent,

Into a land God's eyes had looked not on
To love the tender bloom upon the hills.
To-morrow, when the fishers come at dawn
Upon that shell of me the sea has tossed
To land, as fit for earth to use again,
Men, meeting at the shops and corner streets,
Will speak a word of pity, glossing o'er
With altered accent, dubious sweep of hand,
Their virile, just contempt for one who failed.
But they can never cast my earnings up,
Who know so well my losses. Even you
Who in the mild light of the spirit walk
And hold yourselves acquainted with the truth,
Be not too swift to judge and cast me out!
You shall find other, nobler ways than mine
To work your soul's redemption, — glorious noons
Of battle 'neath the heaven-suspended sign,
And nightly refuge 'neath God's ægis-rim;
Increase of wisdom, and acquaintance held
With the heart's austerities; still governance,
And ripening of the blood in the weekday sun
To make the full-orbed consecrated fruit
At life's end for the Sabbath supper meet.
I shall not sit beside you at that feast,
For ere a seedling of my golden tree

Pushed off its petals to get room to grow,
I stripped the boughs to make an April gaud
And wreathe a spendthrift garland for my hair.
But mine is not the failure God deplores;
For I of old am beauty's votarist,
Long recreant, often foiled and led astray,
But resolute at last to seek her there
Where most she does abide, and crave with tears
That she assoil me of my blemishment.
Low looms her singing face to point the way,
Pendulous, blanched with longing, shedding flame
Of silver on the brown grope of the flood.
The stars are for me; the horizon wakes
Its pilgrim chanting; and the little sand
Grows musical of hope beneath my feet.
The waves that leap to meet my swimming breast
Gossip sweet secrets of the light-drenched way,
And when the deep throbs of the rising surge
Pulse upward with me, and a rain of wings
Blurs round the moon's pale place, she stoops to reach
Still welcome of bright hands across the wave
And sings low, low, globed all in ghostly fire,
Lost verses from my youth's gold canticle.

THE BRUTE

Through his might men work their wills.
They have boweled out the hills
For food to keep him toiling in the cages they have wrought;
And they fling him, hour by hour,
Limbs of men to give him power;
Brains of men to give him cunning; and for dainties to devour
Children's souls, the little worth; hearts of women, cheaply bought:
He takes them and he breaks them, but he gives them scanty thought.

For about the noisy land,
Roaring, quivering 'neath his hand,
His thoughts brood fierce and sullen or laugh in lust of pride
O'er the stubborn things that he,
Breaks to dust and brings to be.
Some he mightily establishes, some flings down utterly.

There is thunder in his stride, nothing ancient
can abide,
When he hales the hills together and bridles up
the tide.

Quietude and loveliness,
Holy sights that heal and bless,
They are scattered and abolished where his iron
hoof is set;
When he splashes through the brae
Silver streams are choked with clay,
When he snorts the bright cliffs crumble and the
woods go down like hay;
He lairs in pleasant cities, and the haggard people
fret
Squalid 'mid their new-got riches, soot-begrimed
and desolate.

They who caught and bound him tight
Laughed exultant at his might,
Saying, "Now behold, the good time comes for
the weariest and the least!
We will use this lusty knave:
No more need for men to slave;
We may rise and look about us and have knowledge ere the grave."

But the Brute said in his breast, "Till the mills
I grind have ceased,
The riches shall be dust of dust, dry ashes be the
feast!

"On the strong and cunning few
Cynic favors I will strew;
I will stuff their maw with overplus until their
spirit dies;
From the patient and the low
I will take the joys they know;
They shall hunger after vanities and still an-hungered go.
Madness shall be on the people, ghastly jealousies
arise;
Brother's blood shall cry on brother up the dead
and empty skies.

"I will burn and dig and hack
Till the heavens suffer lack;
God shall feel a pleasure fail Him, crying to his
cherubim,
'Who hath flung yon mud-ball there
Where my world went green and fair?'
I shall laugh and hug me, hearing how his sentinels declare,

"'T is the Brute they chained to labor! He has
made the bright earth dim.
Store of wares and pelf a plenty, but they got no
good of him.'"

So he plotted in his rage:
So he deals it, age by age.
But even as he roared his curse a still small Voice
befell;
Lo, a still and pleasant voice bade them none the
less rejoice,
For the Brute must bring the good time on; he
has no other choice.
He may struggle, sweat, and yell, but he knows
exceeding well
He must work them out salvation ere they send
him back to hell.

All the desert that he made
He must treble bless with shade,
In primal wastes set precious seed of rapture and
of pain;
All the strongholds that he built
For the powers of greed and guilt —
He must strew their bastions down the sea and
choke their towers with silt;

He must make the temples clean for the gods to come again,
And lift the lordly cities under skies without a stain.

In a very cunning tether
He must lead the tyrant weather;
He must loose the curse of Adam from the worn neck of the race;
He must cast out hate and fear,
Dry away each fruitless tear,
And make the fruitful tears to gush from the deep heart and clear.
He must give each man his portion, each his pride and worthy place;
He must batter down the arrogant and lift the weary face,
On each vile mouth set purity, on each low forehead grace.

Then, perhaps, at the last day,
They will whistle him away,
Lay a hand upon his muzzle in the face of God, and say,
"Honor, Lord, the Thing we tamed!

Let him not be scourged or blamed,
Even through his wrath and fierceness was thy fierce wroth world reclaimed!
Honor Thou thy servants' servant; let thy justice now be shown."
Then the Lord will heed their saying, and the Brute come to his own,
'Twixt the Lion and the Eagle, by the armpost of the Throne.

THE MENAGERIE

Thank God my brain is not inclined to cut
Such capers every day! I'm just about
Mellow, but then — There goes the tent-flap shut.
Rain's in the wind. I thought so: every snout
Was twitching when the keeper turned me out.

That screaming parrot makes my blood run cold.
Gabriel's trump! the big bull elephant
Squeals "Rain!" to the parched herd. The monkeys scold,
And jabber that it's rain water they want.
(It makes me sick to see a monkey pant.)

I'll foot it home, to try and make believe
I'm sober. After this I stick to beer,
And drop the circus when the sane folks leave.
A man's a fool to look at things too near:
They look back, and begin to cut up queer.

Beasts do, at any rate; especially
Wild devils caged. They have the coolest way

Of being something else than what you see:
You pass a sleek young zebra nosing hay,
A nylghau looking bored and distingué, —

And think you've seen a donkey and a bird.
Not on your life! Just glance back, if you dare.
The zebra chews, the nylghau has n't stirred;
But something's happened, Heaven knows what or where
To freeze your scalp and pompadour your hair.

I'm not precisely an æolian lute
Hung in the wandering winds of sentiment,
But drown me if the ugliest, meanest brute
Grunting and fretting in that sultry tent
Did n't just floor me with embarrassment!

'T was like a thunder-clap from out the clear, —
One minute they were circus beasts, some grand,
Some ugly, some amusing, and some queer:
Rival attractions to the hobo band,
The flying jenny, and the peanut stand.

Next minute they were old hearth-mates of mine!
Lost people, eyeing me with such a stare!

Patient, satiric, devilish, divine;
A gaze of hopeless envy, squalid care,
Hatred, and thwarted love, and dim despair.

Within my blood my ancient kindred spoke, —
Grotesque and monstrous voices, heard afar
Down ocean caves when behemoth awoke,
Or through fern forests roared the plesiosaur
Locked with the giant-bat in ghastly war.

And suddenly, as in a flash of light,
I saw great Nature working out her plan;
Through all her shapes from mastodon to mite
Forever groping, testing, passing on
To find at last the shape and soul of Man.

Till in the fullness of accomplished time,
Comes brother Forepaugh, upon business bent,
Tracks her through frozen and through torrid clime,
And shows us, neatly labeled in a tent,
The stages of her huge experiment;

Blabbing aloud her shy and reticent hours;
Dragging to light her blinking, slothful moods;

Publishing fretful seasons when her powers
Worked wild and sullen in her solitudes,
Or when her mordant laughter shook the woods.

Here, round about me, were her vagrant births;
Sick dreams she had, fierce projects she essayed;
Her qualms, her fiery prides, her crazy mirths;
The troublings of her spirit as she strayed,
Cringed, gloated, mocked, was lordly, was afraid,

On that long road she went to seek mankind;
Here were the darkling coverts that she beat
To find the Hider she was sent to find;
Here the distracted footprints of her feet
Whereby her soul's Desire she came to greet.

But why should they, her botch-work, turn about
And stare disdain at me, her finished job?
Why was the place one vast suspended shout
Of laughter? Why did all the daylight throb
With soundless guffaw and dumb-stricken sob?

Helpless I stood among those awful cages;
The beasts were walking loose, and I was bagged!
I, I, last product of the toiling ages,

Goal of heroic feet that never lagged, —
A little man in trousers, slightly jagged.

Deliver me from such another jury!
The Judgment-day will be a picnic to 't.
Their satire was more dreadful than their fury,
And worst of all was just a kind of brute
Disgust, and giving up, and sinking mute.

Survival of the fittest, adaptation,
And all their other evolution terms,
Seem to omit one small consideration,
To wit, that tumblebugs and angleworms
Have souls: there's soul in everything that squirms.

And souls are restless, plagued, impatient things,
All dream and unaccountable desire;
Crawling, but pestered with the thought of wings;
Spreading through every inch of earth's old mire
Mystical hanker after something higher.

Wishes *are* horses, as I understand.
I guess a wistful polyp that has strokes
Of feeling faint to gallivant on land

Will come to be a scandal to his folks;
Legs he will sprout, in spite of threats and jokes.

And at the core of every life that crawls
Or runs or flies or swims or vegetates —
Churning the mammoth's heart-blood, in the galls
Of shark and tiger planting gorgeous hates,
Lighting the love of eagles for their mates;

Yes, in the dim brain of the jellied fish
That is and is not living — moved and stirred
From the beginning a mysterious wish,
A vision, a command, a fatal Word:
The name of Man was uttered, and they heard.

Upward along the æons of old war
They sought him: wing and shank-bone, claw and bill
Were fashioned and rejected; wide and far
They roamed the twilight jungles of their will;
But still they sought him, and desired him still.

Man they desired, but mind you, Perfect Man,
The radiant and the loving, yet to be!
I hardly wonder, when they came to scan

The upshot of their strenuosity,
They gazed with mixed emotions upon *me.*

Well, my advice to you is, Face the creatures,
Or spot them sideways with your weather eye,
Just to keep tab on their expansive features;
It is n't pleasant when you're stepping high
To catch a giraffe smiling on the sly.

If nature made you graceful, don't get gay
Back-to before the hippopotamus;
If meek and godly, find some place to play
Besides right where three mad hyenas fuss:
You may hear language that we won't discuss.

If you're a sweet thing in a flower-bed hat,
Or her best fellow with your tie tucked in,
Don't squander love's bright springtime girding at
An old chimpanzee with an Irish chin:
There may be hidden meaning in his grin.

THE GOLDEN JOURNEY

All day he drowses by the sail
With dreams of her, and all night long
The broken waters are at song
Of how she lingers, wild and pale,
When all the temple lights are dumb,
And weaves her spells to make him come.

The wide sea traversed, he will stand
With straining eyes, until the shoal
Green water from the prow shall roll
Upon the yellow strip of sand —
Searching some fern-hid tangled way
Into the forest old and grey.

Then he will leap upon the shore,
And cast one look up at the sun,
Over his loosened locks will run
The dawn breeze, and a bird will pour
Its rapture out to make life seem
Too sweet to leave for such a dream.

But all the swifter will he go
Through the pale, scattered asphodels,
Down mote-hung dusk of olive dells,
To where the ancient basins throw
Fleet threads of blue and trembling zones
Of gold upon the temple stones.

There noon keeps just a twilight trace;
Twixt love and hate, and death and birth,
No man may choose; nor sobs nor mirth
May enter in that haunted place.
All day the fountain sphynx lets drip
Slow drops of silence from her lip.

To hold the porch-roof slender girls
Of milk-white marble stand arow;
Doubt never blurs a single brow,
And never the noon's faintness curls
From their expectant hush of pride
The lips the god has glorified.

But these things he will barely view,
Or if he stay to heed them, still
But as the lark the lights that spill
From out the sun it soars unto,

Where, past the splendors and the heats,
The sun's heart's self forever beats.

For wide the brazen doors will swing
Soon as his sandals touch the pave;
The anxious light inside will wave
And tremble to a lunar ring
About the form that lieth prone
Before the dreadful altar-stone.

She will not look or speak or stir,
But with drowned lips and cheeks death-white
Will lie amid the pool of light,
Until, grown faint with thirst of her,
He shall bow down his face and sink
Breathless beneath the eddying brink.

Then a swift music will begin,
And as the brazen doors shut slow,
There will be hurrying to and fro,
And lights and calls and silver din,
While through the star-freaked swirl of air
The god's sweet cruel eyes will stare.

HEART'S WILD-FLOWER

To-night her lids shall lift again, slow, soft, with vague desire,
And lay about my breast and brain their hush of spirit fire,
And I shall take the sweet of pain as the laborer his hire.

And though no word shall e'er be said to ease the ghostly sting,
And though our hearts, unhoused, unfed, must still go wandering,
My sign is set upon her head while stars do meet and sing.

Not such a sign as women wear who make their foreheads tame
With life's long tolerance, and bear love's sweetest, humblest name,
Nor such as passion eateth bare with its crown of tears and flame.

Nor such a sign as happy friend sets on his friend's
dear brow
When meadow-pipings break and blend to a key
of autumn woe,
And the woodland says playtime's at end, best
unclasp hands and go.

But where she strays, through blight or blooth,
one fadeless flower she wears,
A little gift God gave my youth, — whose petals
dim were fears,
Awes, adorations, songs of ruth, hesitancies, and
tears.

O heart of mine, with all thy powers of white
beatitude,
What are the dearest of God's dowers to the
children of his blood?
How blow the shy, shy wilding flowers in the
hollows of his wood!

HARMONICS

THIS string upon my harp was best beloved:
I thought I knew its secrets through and through;
Till an old man, whose young eyes lightened blue
'Neath his white hair, bent over me and moved
His fingers up and down, and broke the wire
To such a laddered music, rung on rung,
As from the patriarch's pillow skyward sprung
Crowded with wide-flung wings and feet of fire.

O vibrant heart! so metely tuned and strung
That any untaught hand can draw from thee
One clear gold note that makes the tired years young —
What of the time when Love had whispered me
Where slept thy nodes, and my hand pausefully
Gave to the dim harmonics voice and tongue?

ON THE RIVER

THE faint stars wake and wonder,
Fade and find heart anew;
Above us and far under
Sphereth the watchful blue.

Silent she sits, outbending,
A wild pathetic grace,
A beauty strange, heart-rending,
Upon her hair and face.

O spirit cries that sever
The cricket's level drone!
O to give o'er endeavor
And let love have its own!

Within the mirrored bushes
There wakes a little stir;
The white-throat moves, and hushes
Her nestlings under her.

Beneath, the lustrous river,
The watchful sky o'erhead.
God, God, that Thou should'st ever
Poison thy children's bread!

THE BRACELET OF GRASS

THE opal heart of afternoon
Was clouding on to throbs of storm,
Ashen within the ardent west
The lips of thunder muttered harm,
And as a bubble like to break
Hung heaven's trembling amethyst,
When with the sedge-grass by the lake
I braceleted her wrist.

And when the ribbon grass was tied,
Sad with the happiness we planned,
Palm linked in palm we stood awhile
And watched the raindrops dot the sand;
Until the anger of the breeze
Chid all the lake's bright breathing down,
And ravished all the radiancies
From her deep eyes of brown.

We gazed from shelter on the storm,
And through our hearts swept ghostly pain
To see the shards of day sweep past,
Broken, and none might mend again.

Broken, that none shall ever mend;
Loosened, that none shall ever tie.
O the wind and the wind, will it never end?
O the sweeping past of the ruined sky!

THE DEPARTURE

I

I SAT beside the glassy evening sea,
One foot upon the thin horn of my lyre,
And all its strings of laughter and desire
Crushed in the rank wet grasses heedlessly;
Nor did my dull eyes care to question how
The boat close by had spread its saffron sails,
Nor what might mean the coffers and the bales,
And streaks of new wine on the gilded prow.
Neither was wonder in me when I saw
Fair women step therein, though they were fair
Even to adoration and to awe,
And in the gracious fillets of their hair
Were blossoms from a garden I had known,
Sweet mornings ere the apple buds were blown.

II

One gazed steadfast into the dying west
With lips apart to greet the evening star;
And one with eyes that caught the strife and jar
Of the sea's heart, followed the sunward breast

Of a lone gull; from a slow harp one drew
Blind music like a laugh or like a wail;
And in the uncertain shadow of the sail
One wove a crown of berries and of yew.
Yet even as I said with dull desire,
"All these were mine, and one was mine indeed,"
The smoky music burst into a fire,
And I was left alone in my great need,
One foot upon the thin horn of my lyre
And all its strings crushed in the dripping weed.

FADED PICTURES

ONLY two patient eyes to stare
Out of the canvas. All the rest —
The warm green gown, the small hands pressed
Light in the lap, the braided hair

That must have made the sweet low brow
So earnest, centuries ago,
When some one saw it change and glow —
All faded! Just the eyes burn now.

I dare say people pass and pass
Before the blistered little frame,
And dingy work without a name
Stuck in behind its square of glass.

But I, well, I left Raphael
Just to come drink these eyes of hers,
To think away the stains and blurs
And make all new again and well.

Only, for tears my head will bow,
Because there on my heart's last wall,
Scarce one tint left to tell it all,
A picture keeps its eyes, somehow.

A GREY DAY

GREY drizzling mists the moorlands drape,
Rain whitens the dead sea,
From headland dim to sullen cape
Grey sails creep wearily.
I know not how that merchantman
Has found the heart; but 't is her plan
Seaward her endless course to shape.

Unreal as insects that appall
A drunkard's peevish brain,
O'er the grey deep the dories crawl,
Four-legged, with rowers twain:
Midgets and minims of the earth,
Across old ocean's vasty girth
Toiling — heroic, comical!

I wonder how that merchant's crew
Have ever found the will!
I wonder what the fishers do
To keep them toiling still!
I wonder how the heart of man
Has patience to live out its span,
Or wait until its dreams come true.

THE RIDE BACK

Before the coming of the dark, he dreamed
An old-world faded story: of a knight,
Much like in need to him, who was no knight!
And of a road, much like the road his soul
Groped over, desperate to meet Her soul.
Beside the bed Death waited. And he dreamed.

His limbs were heavy from the fight,
His mail was dark with dust and blood;
On this good horse they bound him tight,
And on his breast they bound the rood
To help him in the ride that night.

When he crashed through the wood's wet rim,
About the dabbled reeds a breeze
Went moaning broken words and dim;
The haggard shapes of twilight trees
Caught with their scrawny hands at him.

Between the doubtful aisles of day
Strange folk and lamentable stood

To maze and beckon him astray,
But through the grey wrath of the wood
He held right on his bitter way.

When he came where the trees were thin,
The moon sat waiting there to see;
On her worn palm she laid her chin,
And laughed awhile in sober glee
To think how strong this knight had been.

When he rode past the pallid lake
The withered yellow stems of flags
Stood breast-high for his horse to break;
Lewd as the palsied lips of hags
The petals in the moon did shake.

When he came by the mountain wall,
The snow upon the heights looked down
And said, "The sight is pitiful.
The nostrils of his steed are brown
With frozen blood; and he will fall."

The iron passes of the hills
With question were importunate;
And, but the sharp-tongued icy rills

Had grown for once compassionate,
The spiteful shades had had their wills.

Just when the ache in breast and brain
And the frost smiting at his face
Had sealed his spirit up with pain,
He came out in a better place,
And morning lay across the plain.

He saw the wet snails crawl and cling
On fern-stalks where the rime had run,
The careless birds went wing and wing,
And in the low smile of the sun
Life seemed almost a pleasant thing.

Right on the panting charger swung
Through the bright depths of quiet grass;
The knight's lips moved as if they sung,
And through the peace there came to pass
The flattery of lute and tongue.

From the mid-flowering of the mead
There swelled a sob of minstrelsy,
Faint sackbuts and the dreamy reed,
And plaintive lips of maids thereby,
And songs blown out like thistle seed.

Forth from her maidens came the bride,
And as his loosened rein fell slack
He muttered, "In their throats they lied
Who said that I should ne'er win back
To kiss her lips before I died!"

SONG–FLOWER AND POPPY

I

IN NEW YORK

HE plays the deuce with my writing time,
For the penny my sixth-floor neighbor throws;
He finds me proud of my pondered rhyme,
And he leaves me — well, God knows
It takes the shine from a tunester's line
When a little mate of the deathless Nine
Pipes up under your nose!

For listen, there is his voice again,
Wistful and clear and piercing sweet.
Where did the boy find such a strain
To make a dead heart beat?
And how in the name of care can he bear
To jet such a fountain into the air
In this grey gulch of a street?

Tuscan slopes or the Piedmontese?
Umbria under the Apennine?
South, where the terraced lemon-trees

Round rich Sorrento shine?
Venice moon on the smooth lagoon? —
Where have I heard that aching tune,
That boyish throat divine?

Beyond my roofs and chimney pots
A rag of sunset crumbles grey;
Below, fierce radiance hangs in clots
O'er the streams that never stay.
Shrill and high, newsboys cry
The worst of the city's infamy
For one more sordid day.

But my desire has taken sail
For lands beyond, soft-horizoned:
Down languorous leagues I hold the trail,
From Marmalada, steeply throned
Above high pastures washed with light,
Where dolomite by dolomite
Looms sheer and spectral-coned,

To purple vineyards looking south
On reaches of the still Tyrrhene;
Virgilian headlands, and the mouth
Of Tiber, where that ship put in

To take the dead men home to God,
Whereof Casella told the mode
To the great Florentine.

Up stairways blue with flowering weed
I climb to hill-hung Bergamo;
All day I watch the thunder breed
Golden above the springs of Po,
Till the voice makes sure its wavering lure,
And by Assisi's portals pure
I stand, with heart bent low.

O hear, how it blooms in the blear dayfall,
That flower of passionate wistful song!
How it blows like a rose by the iron wall
Of the city loud and strong.
How it cries "Nay, nay" to the worldling's way,
To the heart's clear dream how it whispers, "Yea;
Time comes, though the time is long."

Beyond my roofs and chimney piles
Sunset crumbles, ragged, dire;
The roaring street is hung for miles
With fierce electric fire.
Shrill and high, newsboys cry

The gross of the planet's destiny
Through one more sullen gyre.

Stolidly the town flings down
Its lust by day for its nightly lust;
Who does his given stint, 't is known,
Shall have his mug and crust. —
Too base of mood, too harsh of blood,
Too stout to seize the grosser good,
Too hungry after dust!

O hark! how it blooms in the falling dark,
That flower of mystical yearning song:
Sad as a hermit thrush, as a lark
Uplifted, glad, and strong.
Heart, we have chosen the better part!
Save sacred love and sacred art
Nothing is good for long.

II

AT ASSISI

Before St. Francis' burg I wait,
Frozen in spirit, faint with dread;
His presence stands within the gate,
Mild splendor rings his head.

Gently he seems to welcome me:
Knows he not I am quick, and he
Is dead, and priest of the dead?

I turn away from the grey church pile;
I dare not enter, thus undone:
Here in the roadside grass awhile
I will lie and watch for the sun.
Too purged of earth's good glee and strife,
Too drained of the honied lusts of life,
Was the peace these old saints won!

And lo! how the laughing earth says no
To the fear that mastered me;
To the blood that aches and clamors so
How it whispers "Verily."
Here by my side, marvelous-dyed,
Bold stray-away from the courts of pride,
A poppy-bell flaunts free.

St. Francis sleeps upon his hill,
And a poppy flower laughs down his creed;
Triumphant light her petals spill,
His shrines are dim indeed.
Men build and plan, but the soul of man,

Coming with haughty eyes to scan,
Feels richer, wilder need.

How long, old builder Time, wilt bide
Till at thy thrilling word
Life's crimson pride shall have to bride
The spirit's white accord,
Within that gate of good estate
Which thou must build us soon or late,
Hoar workman of the Lord?

HOW THE MEAD-SLAVE WAS SET FREE

Nay, move not! Sit just as you are,
Under the carved wings of the chair.
The hearth-glow sifting through your hair
Turns every dim pearl to a star
Dawn-drowned in floods of brightening air.

I have been thinking of that night
When all the wide hall burst to blaze
With spears caught up, thrust fifty ways
To find my throat, while I lay white
And sick with joy, to think the days

I dragged out in your hateful North —
A slave, constrained at banquet's need
To fill the black bull's horns with mead
For drunken sea-thieves — were henceforth
Cast from me as a poison weed,

While Death thrust roses in my hands!
But you, who knew the flowers he had

Were no such roses ripe and glad
As nod in my far southern lands,
But pallid things to make men sad,

Put back the spears with one calm hand,
Raised on your knee my wondering head,
Wiped off the trickling drops of red
From my torn forehead with a strand
Of your bright loosened hair, and said:

"Sea-rovers! would you kill a skald?
This boy has hearkened Odin sing
Unto the clang and winnowing
Of raven's wings. His heart is thralled
To music, as to some strong king;

"And this great thraldom works disdain
Of lesser serving. Once release
These bonds he bears, and he may please
To give you guerdon sweet as rain
To sailors calmed in thirsty seas."

Then, having soothed their rage to rest,
You led me to old Skagi's throne,
Where yellow gold rims in the stone;

And in my arms, against my breast,
Thrust his great harp of walrus bone.

How they came crowding, tunes on tunes!
How good it was to touch the strings
And feel them thrill like happy things
That flutter from the grey cocoons
On hedge rows, in your gradual springs!

All grew a blur before my sight,
As when the stealthy white fog slips
At noonday on the staggering ships;
I saw one single spot of light,
Your white face, with its eager lips —

And so I sang to that. O thou
Who liftedst me from out my shame!
Wert thou content when Skagi came,
Put his own chaplet on my brow,
And bent and kissed his own harp-frame?

A DIALOGUE IN PURGATORY

Poi disse un altro. . . . "Io son Buonconte:
Giovanna o altri non ha di me cura;
Per ch' io vo tra costor con bassa fronte."

Seguito il terzo spirito al secondo,
"*Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;*
Siena mi fe, disfecemi Maremma.
Salsi colui che inannellata pria
Disposata m' avea colla sua gemma."

PURGATORIO, CANTO V.

I

BUONCONTE

SISTER, the sun has ceased to shine;
By companies of twain and trine
Stars gather; from the sea
The moon comes momently.

On all the roads that ring our hill
The sighing and the hymns are still;
It is our time to gain
Strength for to-morrow's pain.

Yet still your eyes are wholly bent
Upon the way that Virgil went,

Following Sordello's sign,
With the dark Florentine.

Night now has barred their upward track:
There where the mountain-side folds back
And in the Vale of Flowers
The Princes count their hours

Those three friends sit in the clear starlight
With the green-clad angels left and right,—
Soul made by wakeful soul
More earnest for the goal.

So let us, sister, though our place
Is barren of that Valley's grace,
Sit hand in hand, till we
Seem rich as those friends be.

II

LA PIA

Brother, 't were sweet your hand to feel
In mine; it would a little heal
The shame that makes me poor,
And dumb at the heart's core.

But where our spirits felt Love's dearth,
Down on the green and pleasant earth,
Remains the fleshly shell,
Love's garment tangible.

So now our hands have naught to say:
Heart unto heart some other way
Must utter forth its pain,
Must glee or comfort gain.

Ah, no! For souls like you and me
Some comfort waits, but never glee:
Not yours the young men's singing
In Heaven, at the bride-bringing;

Not mine, beside God's living waters,
Dance of the marriageable daughters,
The laughter and the ease
Beneath His summer trees.

III

BUONCONTE

In fair Arezzo's halls and bowers
My Giovanna speeds her hours
Delicately, nor cares
To shorten by her prayers

My days upon this mount of ruth:
If those who come from earth speak sooth,
Though still I call and call,
She does not heed at all.

And if aright your words I read
At Dante's passing, he you wed
Dipped from the drains of Hell
The marriage hydromel.

O therefore, while the moon intense
Holds yonder dreaming sea suspense,
And round the shadowy coasts
Gather the wistful ghosts,

Let us sit quiet all the night,
And wonder, wonder on the light
Worn by those spirits fair
Whom Love has not left bare.

IV

LA PIA

Even as theirs, the chance was mine
To meet and mate beneath Love's sign,
To feel in soul and sense
The solemn influence

Which, breathed upon a man or maid,
Maketh forever unafraid,
Though life with death unite
That spirit to affright, —

Which lifts the changèd heart high up,
As the priest lifts the changèd cup,
Boldens the feet to pace
Before God's proving face.

O just a thought beyond the blue
The wings of the dove yearned down and through!
Even now I hear and hear
How near they were, how near!

I murmur not. Rightly disgraced,
The weak hand stretched abroad in haste
For gifts barely allowed
The tacit, strong, and proud.

But therefore was I so intent
To watch where Dante onward went
With the Roman spirit pure
And the grave troubadour,

Because my mind was busy then
With the loves that wait those gentle men:

Cunizza one; and one
Bice, above the sun;

And for the other, more and less
Than woman's near-felt tenderness,
A million voices dim
Praising him, praising him.

V

BUONCONTE

The waves that wash this mountain's base
Were crimson in the sun's low rays,
When, singing high and fast,
An angel downward passed,

To bid some patient soul arise
And make it fair for Paradise;
And upward, so attended,
That soul its journey wended;

Yet you, who in these lower rings
Wait for the coming of such wings,
Turned not your eyes to view
Whether they came for you,

But watched, but watched great Virgil stayed
Greeting Sordello's couchant shade,
Which to salute him rose
Like lion from its pose;

While humbly by those lords of song
Stood he whose living limbs are strong
To mount where Mary's bliss
Is shed on Beatrice.

On him your gaze was fastened, more
Than on those great names Mantua bore;
Your eyes hold the distress
Still, of that wistfulness.

Yea, fit he seemed much love to rouse
His pilgrim lips and iron brows
Grew like a woman's, dim,
While you held speech with him;

And troubled came his mortal breath
The while I told him of my death;
His looks were changed and wan
When Virgil led him on.

VI

LA PIA

E'er since Casella came this morn,
Newly o'er yonder ocean borne,
Bound upward for the choir
Who purge themselves in fire,

And from that meinie he was of
Stayed backward at my cry of love,
To speak awhile with me
Of life and Tuscany,

And, parting, told us how e'er day
Was done, Dante would come this way,
With mortal feet, to find
His sweetheart, sky-enshrined, —

E'er since Casella spoke such news
My heart has lain in a golden muse,
Picturing him and her,
What starry ones they were.

And now the moon sheds its compassion
O'er the hushed mount, I try to fashion

The manner of their meeting,
Their few first words of greeting.

O well for them, with claspèd hands,
Unshamed amid the heavenly bands!
They hear no pitying pair
Of old-time lovers there

Look down and say in an undertone,
"This latest-come, who comes alone,
Was still alone on earth,
And lonely from his birth."

Nor feel a sudden whisper mar
God's weather, "Dost thou see the scar
That spirit hideth so?
Who dealt her such a blow

"That God can hardly wipe it out?"
And answer, "She gave love, no doubt,
To one who saw not fit
To set much store by it."

THE DAGUERREOTYPE

This, then, is she,
My mother as she looked at seventeen,
When she first met my father. Young incredibly,
Younger than spring, without the faintest trace
Of disappointment, weariness, or tean
Upon the childlike earnestness and grace
Of the waiting face.
These close-wound ropes of pearl
(Or common beads made precious by their use)
Seem heavy for so slight a throat to wear;
But the low bodice leaves the shoulders bare
And half the glad swell of the breast, for news
That now the woman stirs within the girl.
And yet,
Even so, the loops and globes
Of beaten gold
And jet
Hung, in the stately way of old,
From the ears' drooping lobes
On festivals and Lord's-day of the week,
Show all too matron-sober for the cheek, —

Which, now I look again, is perfect child,
Or no — or no — 't is girlhood's very self,
Moulded by some deep, mischief-ridden elf
So meek, so maiden mild,
But startling the close gazer with the sense
Of passions forest-shy and forest-wild,
And delicate delirious merriments.

As a moth beats sidewise
And up and over, and tries
To skirt the irresistible lure
Of the flame that has him sure,
My spirit, that is none too strong to-day,
Flutters and makes delay, —
Pausing to wonder on the perfect lips,
Lifting to muse upon the low-drawn hair
And each hid radiance there,
But powerless to stem the tide-race bright,
The vehement peace which drifts it toward the light
Where soon — ah, now, with cries
Of grief and giving-up unto its gain
It shrinks no longer nor denies,
But dips
Hurriedly home to the exquisite heart of pain, —

And all is well, for I have seen them plain,
The unforgettable, the unforgotten eyes!
Across the blinding gush of these good tears
They shine as in the sweet and heavy years
When by her bed and chair
We children gathered jealously to share
The sunlit aura breathing myrrh and thyme,
Where the sore-stricken body made a clime
Gentler than May and pleasanter than rhyme,
Holier and more mystical than prayer.

God, how thy ways are strange!
That this should be, even this,
The patient head
Which suffered years ago the dreary change!
That these so dewy lips should be the same
As those I stooped to kiss
And heard my harrowing half-spoken name,
A little ere the one who bowed above her,
Our father and her very constant lover,
Rose stoical, and we knew that she was dead.
Then I, who could not understand or share
His antique nobleness,
Being unapt to bear
The insults which time flings us for our proof,

Fled from the horrible roof
Into the alien sunshine merciless,
The shrill satiric fields ghastly with day,
Raging to front God in his pride of sway
And hurl across the lifted swords of fate
That ringed Him where He sat
My puny gage of scorn and desolate hate
Which somehow should undo Him, after all!
That this girl face, expectant, virginal,
Which gazes out at me
Boon as a sweetheart, as if nothing loth
(Save for the eyes, with other presage stored)
To pledge me troth,
And in the kingdom where the heart is lord
Take sail on the terrible gladness of the deep
Whose winds the grey Norns keep, —
That this should be indeed
The flesh which caught my soul, a flying seed,
Out of the to and fro
Of scattering hands where the seedsman Mage,
Stooping from star to star and age to age
Sings as he sows!
That underneath this breast
Nine moons I fed
Deep of divine unrest,

While over and over in the dark she said,
"Blessèd! but not as happier children blessed" —
That this should be
Even she. . . .
God, how with time and change
Thou makest thy footsteps strange!
Ah, now I know
They play upon me, and it is not so.
Why, 't is a girl I never saw before,
A little thing to flatter and make weep,
To tease until her heart is sore,
Then kiss and clear the score;
A gypsy run-the-fields,
A little liberal daughter of the earth,
Good for what hour of truancy and mirth
The careless season yields
Hither-side the flood of the year and yonder of
the neap;
Then thank you, thanks again, and twenty light
good-byes. —
O shrined above the skies,
Frown not, clear brow,
Darken not, holy eyes!
Thou knowest well I know that it is thou!
Only to save me from such memories

As would unman me quite,
Here in this web of strangeness caught
And prey to troubled thought
Do I devise
These foolish shifts and slight;
Only to shield me from the afflicting sense
Of some waste influence
Which from this morning face and lustrous hair
Breathes on me sudden ruin and despair.
In any other guise,
With any but this girlish depth of gaze,
Your coming had not so unsealed and poured
The dusty amphoras where I had stored
The drippings of the winepress of my days.
I think these eyes foresee,
Now in their unawakened virgin time,
Their mother's pride in me,
And dream even now, unconsciously,
Upon each soaring peak and sky-hung lea
You pictured I should climb.
Broken premonitions come,
Shapes, gestures visionary,
Not as once to maiden Mary
The manifest angel with fresh lilies came
Intelligibly calling her by name;

But vanishingly, dumb,
Thwarted and bright and wild,
As heralding a sin-defiled,
Earth-encumbered, blood-begotten, passionate man-child,
Who yet should be a trump of mighty call
Blown in the gates of evil kings
To make them fall;
Who yet should be a sword of flame before
The soul's inviolate door
To beat away the clang of hellish wings;
Who yet should be a lyre
Of high unquenchable desire
In the day of little things. —
Look, where the amphoras,
The yield of many days,
Trod by my hot soul from the pulp of self
And set upon the shelf
In sullen pride
The Vineyard-master's tasting to abide —
O mother mine!
Are these the bringings-in, the doings fine,
Of him you used to praise?
Emptied and overthrown
The jars lie strown.

These, for their flavor duly nursed,
Drip from the stopples vinegar accursed;
These, I thought honied to the very seal,
Dry, dry, — a little acid meal,
A pinch of mouldy dust,
Sole leavings of the amber-mantling must;
These, rude to look upon,
But flasking up the liquor dearest won,
Through sacred hours and hard,
With watching and with wrestlings and with grief,
Even of these, of these in chief,
The stale breath sickens, reeking from the shard.
Nothing is left. Ay, how much less than naught!
What shall be said or thought
Of the slack hours and waste imaginings,
The cynic rending of the wings,
Known to that froward, that unreckoning heart
Whereof this brewage was the precious part,
Treasured and set away with furtive boast?
O dear and cruel ghost,
Be merciful, be just!
See, I was yours and I am in the dust.
Then look not so, as if all things were well!
Take your eyes from me, leave me to my shame,
Or else, if gaze they must,

Steel them with judgment, darken them with
blame;
But by the ways of light ineffable
You bade me go and I have faltered from,
By the low waters moaning out of hell
Whereto my feet have come,
Lay not on me these intolerable
Looks of rejoicing love, of pride, of happy trust!

Nothing dismayed?
By all I say and all I hint not made
Afraid?
O then, stay by me! Let
These eyes afflict me, cleanse me, keep me yet
Brave eyes and true!
See how the shriveled heart, that long has lain
Dead to delight and pain,
Stirs, and begins again
To utter pleasant life, as if it knew
The wintry days were through;
As if in its awakening boughs it heard
The quick, sweet-spoken bird.
Strong eyes and brave,
Inexorable to save!

SECOND COMING

And Later Poems

SECOND COMING

Once, by an arch of ancient stone,
  Beneath Italian olive-trees
(In pentecostal youth, too prone
  To visions such as these),

And now a second time, to-day,
  Yonder, an hour ago! 'T is strange.
— The hot beach shelving to the bay,
  That far white mountain range,

The motley town where Turk and Greek
  Spit scorn and hatred as I pass;
Seraglio windows, doors that reek
  Sick perfume of the mass;

The muezzin cry from Allah's tower,
  French sailors singing in the street;
The Western meets the Eastern power,
  And mingles — this is Crete.

Yonder on snowy Ida, Zeus
  Was cradled; through those mountain haunts

The new moon hurried, letting loose
  The raving Corybants,

Who after thrid the Cyclades
  To Thebes of Cadmos, with the slim
Wild god for whom Euripides
  Fashioned the deathless hymn.

And yonder, ere in Ajalon
  Young Judah's lion ramped for war,
Dædalus built the Knossian
  House of the Minotaur.

—'T is strange! No wonder and no dread
  Was on me; hardly even surprise.
I knew before he raised his head
  Or fixed me with his eyes

That it was he; far off I knew
  The leaning figure by the boat,
The long straight gown of faded hue;
  The hair that round his throat

Fell forward as he bent in speech
  Above the naked sailor there,

Calking his vessel on the beach,
  Full in the noonday glare.

Sharp rang the sailor's mallet-stroke
  Pounding the tow into the seam;
He paused and mused, and would have spoke,
  Lifting great eyes of dream

Unto those eyes which slowly turned —
  As once before, even so now —
Till full on mine their passion burned
  With, "Yes, and is it thou?"

Then o'er the face about to speak
  Again he leaned; the sunburnt hair,
Fallen forward, hid the tawny cheek;
  And I who, for my share,

Had but the instant's gaze, no more,
  And sweat and shuddering of the mind,
Stumbled along the dazzling shore,
  Until a cool sweet wind

From far-off Ida's silver caves
  Said, "Stay"; and here I sit the while.

— Silken Mediterranean waves,
  From isle to fabled isle,

Flame softly north to Sunium,
  And west by England's war-cliff strong
To where Ulysses' men saw loom
  The mount of Dante's song.

As far as where the coast-line dies
  In sharp sun-dazzle, goes the light
Dance-dance of amber butterflies
  Above the beach-flowers, bright

And jealous as the sudden blood
  The lovers of these island girls
Spill in their frays; o'er flower and bud
  The light dance dips and whirls.

And all my being, for an hour,
  Has sat in stupor, without thought,
Empty of memory, love, or power,
  A dumb wild creature caught

In toils of purpose not its own!
  But now at last the ebbed will turns;

Feeding on spirit, blood, and bone,
The ghostly protest burns.

"Yea, it is I, 't is I indeed!
But who art thou, and plannest what?
Beyond all use, beyond all need!
Importunate, unbesought,

"Unwelcome, unendurable!
To the vague boy I was before —
O unto him thou camest well;
But now, a boy no more,

"Firm-seated in my proper good,
Clear-operant in my functions due,
Potent and plenteous of my mood, —
What hast thou here to do?

"Yes, I have loved thee — love thee, yes;
But also — hear'st thou? — also him
Who out of Ida's wilderness
Over the bright sea-rim,

"With shaken cones and mystic dance,
To Dirce and her seven waters

Led on the raving Corybants,
And lured the Theban daughters

"To play on the delirious hills
Three summer days, three summer nights,
Where wert thou when these had their wills?
How liked thee their delights?

"Past Melos, Delos, to the straits,
The waters roll their spangled mirth,
And westward, through Gibraltar gates,
To my own under-earth,

"My glad, great land, which at the most
Knows that its fathers knew thee; so
Will spend for thee nor count the cost;
But follow thee? Ah, no!

"Thine image gently fades from earth!
Thy churches are as empty shells,
Dim-plaining of thy words and worth,
And of thy funerals!

"But oh, upon what errand, then,
Leanest thou at the sailor's ear?
Hast thou yet more to say, that men
Have heard not, and must hear?"

OLD POURQUOI

'T WAS not yet night, but night was due;
The earth had fallen chalky-dun;
Our road dipped straight as eye could run,
Between the poles, set two and two,
And poplars, one and one,

Then rose to where far roofs and spires
Etched a vague strip of Norman sky:
The sea-wind had begun to sigh
From tree to tree, and up the wires
Slid its frail, mounting cry.

All afternoon our minds had reveled
In steep, skylarking enterprise;
Our hearts had climbed a dozen skies,
And fifty frowning strongholds leveled
Of Life's old enemies.

A trifle, here and there, was spared
Till morning found us more adept;
But, broadly speaking, we had swept

Earth of her wrongs; light had been flared
Where the last Error slept!

Then, nothing said and nothing seen,
Misgiving gripped us. Treeless, bare,
The moorland country everywhere
Lay blackened; but a powdery sheen
Hung tangled in the air.

And Heaven knows what suspense and doubt
Prowled in the dusk! A peasant's door,
Where naught was visible before,
Opened, and let the lamp shine out
Across the crumpled moor.

A stone's-throw off some drowsy sheep
Took fright; across a rise of land
In shadowy scamper went the band;
Three bleating ewes held back to keep
Their coward young in hand.

And borne across the shallow vale,
Along the highway from the town,
A voice the distance could not drown
Chanted an eerie, endless tale,
Now shrill, now dropping down

To querulous, questioning minor song;
Now sweeping in a solemn gust,
As if some great dishonoured dust
Came crying its ancestral wrong,
And found no listener just.

And as the voice drew nearer toward,
It dropped through vague disastrous bars,
Heart-broken roulades, sudden jars
Of discord; then superbly soared
Into a heaven whose stars

Twinkled to some immortal jest,
And satire was the cosmic mood; —
Upon which, down the twilight road,
With stolid haste, monotonous zest,
Shuffled or limped or strode, —

Who? What? King David, crazed and free!
Hamlet, grown old, and wandering!
The ghost of Tiryns' murdered king
Clamorous by its native sea;
Or his who made to sing

The Frogs, and set the Wasps to buzz
Round plague-struck Athens; the mid-pain

Of old Laocoön; Paul Verlaine,
In high talk with the Man of Uz
Outside his prison-pane!

One moment by the darkening West
We saw the grand old grizzled head,
The stricken face, the rolling, red,
Quizzical eyeballs, the bared chest,
Hairy, Homeric, spread

And laboring with the grievous chant,
The knotted hands raised high and wrung,
As, craning through the gloom, he flung
Into our teeth that iterant
Enormous word he sung.

Then he was gone. Slow up the hill,
And faster down the other side,
The wild monotonous question died;
Again the sea-wind whispered shrill,
As if the sea replied.

I muttered, "Did you hear?" and you
Nodded. In silence half a mile
We stumbled onward: you meanwhile

Had paper out, your pencil flew
In quirk and quiddet vile.

Till in disgust I seized your hand,
And thundered, "Scratching music, clod?
Getting his tune down? Suffering God!
Have you no heart to understand?"
One more New-England nod,

And "Yes, I heard, my son, I heard.
A tune fit for the mutinous dead
To march to when, Prometheus-led,
They storm high Heaven! As for his word,
Pourquoi? was all he said!"

Pourquoi? Pourquoi? Yes, that was all!
Only the darkest cry that haunts
The corridors of tragic chance,
Couched in the sweet, satirical,
Impudent tongue of France.

Only the bitterest wail flung out
From worlds that traffic to their mart
Without a pilot or a chart;
With "What?" the body of their doubt,
And "Why?" the quaking heart.

Old bard and brother to the Sphinx!
I wonder what abysmal luck
Had left your face so planet-struck,
And driven you on such horrid brinks
To play the run-amuck.

I wonder down what road to-night
You shuffle; from what plunging star
Your gnarled old hands uplifted are,
Between moth-light and cockshut-light,
Calling young hearts to war!

I AM THE WOMAN

I AM the Woman, ark of the law and its breaker,
Who chastened her step and taught her knees to be meek,
Bridled and bitted her heart and humbled her cheek,
Parceled her will, and cried, "Take more!" to the taker,
Shunned what they told her to shun, sought what they bade her seek,
Locked up her mouth from scornful speaking: now it is open to speak.

I am she that is terribly fashioned, the creature
Wrought in God's perilous mood, in His unsafe hour.
The morning star was mute, beholding my feature,
Seeing the rapture I was, the shame, and the power,
Scared at my manifold meaning; he heard me call,
"O fairest among ten thousand, acceptable brother!"

And he answered not, for doubt; till he saw me crawl
And whisper down to the secret worm, "O mother,
Be not wroth in the ancient house; thy daughter forgets not at all!"

I am the Woman, fleer away,
Soft withdrawer back from the maddened mate,
Lurer inward and down to the gates of day
And crier there in the gate,
"What shall I give for thee, wild one, say!
The long, slow rapture and patient anguish of life,
Or art thou minded a swifter way?
Ask if thou canst, the gold, but O, if thou must,
Good is the shining dross, lovely the dust!
Look at me, I am the Woman, harlot and heavenly wife;
Tell me thy price, be unashamed; I will assuredly pay!"

I am also the Mother: of two that I bore
I comfort and feed the slayer, feed and comfort the slain.
Did they number my daughters and sons? I am mother of more!

Many a head they marked not, here in my bosom
has lain,
Babbling with unborn lips in a tongue to be,
Far, incredible matters, all familiar to me.
Still would the man come whispering, "Wife!"
but many a time my breast
Took him not as a husband: I soothed him and
laid him to rest
Even as the babe of my body, and knew him for
such.
My mouth is open to speak, that was dumb too
much!
I say to you I am the Mother; and under the
sword
Which flamed each way to harry us forth from the
Lord,
I saw Him young at the portal, weeping and
staying the rod,
And I, even I was His mother, and I yearned as
the mother of God.

I am also the Spirit. The Sisters laughed
When I sat with them dumb in the portals, over
my lamp, —
Half asleep in the doors: for my gown was raught

Off at the shoulder to shield from the wind and the
rain
The wick I tended against the mysterious hour
When the silent City of Being should ring with song,
As the Lord came in with Life to the marriage
bower.
"Look!" laughed the elder Sisters; and crimson
with shame
I hid my breast away from the rosy flame.
"Ah!" cried the leaning Sisters, pointing, doing
me wrong;
"Do you see?" laughed the wanton Sisters. "She
will get her a lover erelong!"
And it was but a little while till unto my need
He was given, indeed,
And we walked where waxing world after world
went by;
And I said to my lover, "Let us begone,
O, let us begone, and try
Which of them all the fairest to dwell in is,
Which is the place for us, our desirable clime!"
But he said, "They are only the huts and the little
villages,
Pleasant to go and lodge in rudely over the
vintage-time!"

Scornfully spake he, being unwise,
Being flushed at heart because of our walking together.
But I was mute with passionate prophecies;
My heart went veiled and faint in the golden weather,
While universe drifted by after still universe.
Then I cried, "Alas, we must hasten and lodge therein,
One after one, and in every star that they shed!
A dark and a weary thing is come on our head —
To search obedience out in the bosom of sin,
To listen deep for love when thunders the curse;
For O my love, behold where the Lord hath planted
In every star in the midst his dangerous Tree!
Still I must pluck thereof and bring unto thee,
Saying, "The coolness for which all night we have panted;
Taste of the goodly thing, I have tasted first!"
Bringing us noway coolness, but burning thirst,
Giving us noway peace, but implacable strife,
Loosing upon us the wounding joy and the wasting sorrow of life!

I am the Woman, ark of the Law and sacred arm
to upbear it,
Heathen trumpet to overthrow and idolatrous
sword to shear it:
Yea, she whose arm was round the neck of the
morning star at song,
Is she who kneeleth now in the dust and cries at
the secret door,
"Open to me, O sleeping mother! The gate is
heavy and strong.
Open to me, I am come at last; be wroth with thy
child no more.
Let me lie down with thee there in the dark, and
be slothful with thee as before!"

THE DEATH OF EVE

I

At dawn they came to the stream Hiddekel,
Old Eve and her red first-born, who was now
Greyer than she, and bowed with more than years.
Then Cain beneath his level palm looked hard
Across the desert, and turned with outspread hand
As one who says, "Thou seest; we are fooled."
But Eve, with clutching fingers on his arm,
And pointing eastward where the risen sun
Made a low mist of light, said, "It is there!"

II

For, many, many months, in the great tent
Of Enoch, Eve had pined, and dared not tell
Her longing: not to Irad, Enoch's son,
Masterful like his father, who had held
Harsh rule, and named the tent-place with his name;
Not to mild Seth, given her in Abel's stead;
Not unto angry Lamech, nor his wives,
Usurpers of her honor in the house;

Not to young Jubal, songs-man of the tribe,
Who touched his harp at twilight by her door;
And not to bed-rid Adam, most of all
Not unto Adam. Yet at last, the spring
Being at end, and evening with warm stars
Falling upon them by the camel kraal,
Weary with long desire she spoke to Seth,
Touching her meaning faintly and far off
To try him. With still scrutiny awhile
He looked at her; then, lifting doubtful hands
Of prayer, he led her homeward to the tent,
With tremulous speech of small and week-day things.
Next, as she lay by Adam before dawn,
His big and wasted hand groping for hers
Suddenly made her half-awakened heart
Break back and back across the shadowy years
To Eden, and God calling in the dew,
And all that song of Paradise foredone
Which Jubal made in secret, fearing her
The storied mother; but in secret, too,
Herself had listened, while the maids at toil
Or by the well at evening sang of her
Untruthful things, which, when she once had heard,

Seemed truthful. Now, bowed upon Adam's breast,
In the deep hush that comes before the dawn,
She whispered hints and fragments of her will;
And when the shaggy forehead made no sign,
And the blind face searched still as quietly
In the tent-roof for what, these many months,
It seemed to seek for there, she held him close
And poured her whole wild meaning in his ear.
But as a man upon his death-bed dreams
That he should know a matter, and knows it not,
Nor who they are who fain would have him know,
He turned to hers his dim, disastrous eyes,
Wherein the knowledge of her and the long love
Glimmered through veil on veil of vacancy.
That evening little Jubal, coming home
Singing behind his flock, saw ancient Eve
Crouched by the ruined altar in the glade,
The accursèd place, sown deep each early spring
With stones and salt — the Valley of the Blood;
And that same night Eve fled under the stars
Eastward to Nod, the land of violence,
To Cain, and the strong city he had built
Against all men who hunted for his soul.

III

She gave her message darkly in the gates,
And waited trembling. At day-fall he came.
She knew him not beneath his whitened hair;
But when at length she knew him, and was known,
The whitened hair, the bent and listening frame,
The savage misery of the sidelong eyes,
Fell on her heart with strangling. So it was
That now for many days she held her peace,
Abiding with him till he seemed again
The babe she bare first in the wilderness,
Her maiden fruits to Adam, the new joy
The desert bloomed with, which the desert stars
Whispered concerning. Yet she held her peace,
Until he seemed a young man in the house,
A gold frontlet of pride and a green cedar;
Then, leading him apart, Eve told her wish,
Not faltering now nor uttering it far off,
But as a sovereign mother to her son
Speaks simple destiny. He looked at her
Dimly, as if he saw her not; then stooped,
Sharpening his brows upon her. With a cry
She laid fierce, shaken hands about his breast,
Drew down his neck, and harshly from his brow
Pushing the head-band and the matted locks,

Baring the livid flesh with violence,
She kissed him on the Sign. Cain bowed his head
Upon her shoulder, saying, "I will go!"

IV

Now they had come to the stream Hiddekel,
And passed beyond the stream. There, full in face,
Where the low morning made a mist of light,
The Garden and its gates lay like a flower
Afloat on the still waters of the dawn.
The clicking leap of bright-mailed grasshoppers,
The dropping of sage-beetles from their perch
On the gnawed cactus, even the pulsing drum
Of blood-beats in their ears, merged suddenly
Into ethereal hush. Then Cain made halt,
Held her, and muttered, "'T is enough. Thou sawest!
His Angel stood and threatened in the sun!"
And Eve said, "Yea, and though the day were set
With sworded angels, thou would'st wait for me
Yonder, before the gates; which, look you, child,
Lie open to me as the gates to him,
Thy father, when he entered in his rage,
Calling thee from the dark, where of old days

I kept thee folded, hidden, till he called."
So grey Cain by the unguarded portal sat,
His arms crossed o'er his forehead, and his face
Hid in his meagre knees; but ancient Eve
Passed on into the vales of Paradise.

V

Trancèd in lonely radiance stood the Tree,
As Eve put back the glimmering ferns and vines
And crept into the place. Awhile she stooped,
And as a wild thing by the drinking-pool
Peers ere it drinks, she peered. Then, laughing low,
Her frame of grief and body of her years
She lifted proudly to its virgin height,
Flung her lean arms into the pouring day,
And circling with slow paces round the Tree,
She sang her stifled meaning out to God.

EVE'S SONG

Behold, against thy will, against thy word,
Against the wrath and warning of thy sword,
Eve has been Eve, O Lord!
A pitcher filled, she comes back from the brook,
A wain she comes, laden with mellow ears;

She is a roll inscribed, a prophet's book
Writ strong with characters.
Behold, Eve willed it so; look, if it be so, look!

Early at dawn, while yet thy watchers slept,
Lightly her untamed spirit over-leapt
The walls where she was kept.
As a young comely leopardess she stood:
Her lustrous fell, her sullen grace, her fleetness,
They gave her foretaste, in thy tangled wood,
Of many a savage sweetness,
Good to fore-gloat upon; being tasted, sweet and good.

O swayer in the sunlit tops of trees,
O comer up with cloud out of the seas,
O laugher at thine ease
Over thine everlasting dream of mirth,
O lord of savage pleasures, savage pains,
Knew'st Thou not Eve, who broughtest her to birth?
Searcher of breast and reins,
Thou should'st have searched thy Woman, the seed-
pod of thine earth!

Herself hath searched her softly through and through;
Singing she lifts her full soul up to view;
Lord, do Thou praise it, too!

Look, as she turns it, how it dartles free
Its gathered meanings: woman, mother, wife,
Spirit that was and is and waits to be,
Worm of the dust of life,
Child, sister — ghostly rays! What lights are these,
Lord, see!

Look where Eve lifts her storied soul on high,
And turns it as a ball, she knows not why,
Save that she could not die
Till she had shown Thee all the secret sphere —
The bright rays and the dim, and these that run
Bright-darkling, making Thee to doubt and fear, —
Oh, love them every one!
Eve pardons Thee not one, not one, Lord; dost Thou
hear?

Lovely to Eve was Adam's praising breath;
His face averted bitter was as death;
Abel, her son, and Seth
Lifted her heart to heaven, praising her;
Cain with a little frown darkened the stars;
And when the strings of Jubal's harp would stir,
Like honey in cool jars
The words he praised her with, like rain his praises
were.

Still, still with prayer and ecstasy she strove
To be the woman they did well approve,
That, narrowed to their love,
She might have done with bitterness and blame;
But still along the yonder edge of prayer
A spirit in a fiery whirlwind came —
Eve's spirit, wild and fair —
Crying with Eve's own voice the number of her name.

Yea, turning in the whirlwind and the fire,
Eve saw her own proud being all entire
Made perfect by desire;
And from the rounded gladness of that sphere
Came bridal songs and harpings and fresh laughter;
"*Glory unto the faithful!*" *sounded clear,*
And then, a little after,
"*Whoso denyeth aught, let him depart from here!*"

Now, therefore, Eve, with mystic years o'er-scored,
Danceth and doeth pleasure to Thee, Lord,
According to the word
That Thou hast spoken to her by her dream.
Singing a song she dimly understands,
She lifts her soul to let the splendor stream.

Lord, take away thy hands!
Let this beam pierce thy heart, and this most piercing
beam!

Far off, rebelliously, yet for thy sake,
She gathered them, O Thou who lovest to break
A thousand souls, and shake
Their dust along the wind, but sleeplessly
Searchest the Bride fulfilled in limb and feature,
Ready and boon to be fulfilled of Thee,
Thine ample, tameless creature, —
Against thy will and word, behold, Lord, this is She!

VI

From carven plinth and thousand-galleried green
Cedars, and all close boughs that over-tower,
The shadows lengthened eastward from the gates,
And still Cain hid his forehead in his knees,
Nor dared to look abroad lest he might find
More watchers in the portals: for he heard
What seemed the rush of wings; from while to
while
A pallor grew and faded in his brain,
As if a great light passed him near at hand.
But when above the darkening desert swales

The moon came, shedding white, unlikely day,
Cain rose, and with his back against the stones,
As a keen fighter at the desperate odds,
Glared round him. Cool and silent lay the night,
Empty of any foe. Then, as a man
Who has a thing to do, and makes his fear
An icy wind to freeze his purpose firm,
He stole in through the pillars of the gate,
Down aisles of shadow windowed with the moon,
By meads with the still stars communicant,
Past heaven-bosoming pool and poolèd stream,
Until he saw, through tangled fern and vine,
The Tree, where God had made its habitation:
And crouched above the shape that had been Eve,
With savage, listening frame and sidelong eyes,
Cain waited for the coming of the dawn.

THE THREE ANGELS

BEFORE my feet the curving strand
Unblurs its outline from the sea,
And light feels upward like a hand
To find if yet creation be.
Like one whose eyes in fear are furled
It feels about the pallid world,
And gropes and lingers anxiously.

And sure at length that all is good,
Upon the pavement of the deep
Dawn walks with wings that burn abroad
And lifted hands that seem to keep
Attention till a word be said;
And now day lifts above its head
A harp that soon those hands will sweep.

O angel day, if thou wilt sing
Look hither what has fallen to us —
Me on the bright beach wandering
And her within the cliff-hung house!
The word thou darest not say, she says;

A wilder than thy song, I raise
Above the passes perilous.

Last night I sat at her right hand:
Though Death upon the left hand stood,
Our hearts were ne'er so light and bland;
As in a moonlit summer wood
Friend unto happy friend we spake,
As swan by swan on a windless lake
We drifted down God's glassy flood.

We had been sweet friends long before,
But till this evening's dark mischance,
Aye, never till this deep death-hour
Had such a heart been ours to dance
Childlike upon the hills of glee;
So on those hills she played with me,
Through swooning pain and ether trance.

And yet had not been breathed a sound
Of love, nor a thought of love been thought.
With light of light her brow was wound
When mutely she made question, "What
Means this strange light about your brow?"
And I made answer mute, "You know
It is the love that we have found."

Like flame afar her life did rise
And from the ends of being came,
Bare as at birth, without disguise,
To meet my spirit's naked flame
Which towered from out the primal mist
To her. — Her lips lay all unkissed;
We made no sign, we named no name.

O angel day, O seraph bright!
As thou upon the mortal deep
We o'er these coasts of deathless light,
With lifted wings strong silence keep.
Between the plumed and whispering fires
We raise on high the golden lyres
Which soon our burning hands shall smite!

A PRAIRIE RIDE

I

When I look back and say, of all our hours
This one or that was best,
Straightway, from north and south, from east and west,
With banners strange and tributary powers
The others camp against me. Thus,
Now for many nights and days,
The hills of memory are mutinous,
Hearing me raise
Above all other praise
That autumn morn
When league on league between ripe fields of corn,
Galloping neck and neck or loitering hand in hand,
We rode across the prairie land
Where I was born.

II

I never knew how good
Were those fields and happy farms,
Till, leaning from her horse, she stretched her arms

To greet and to receive them; nor for all
My knowing, did I know her womanhood
Until I saw the gesture understood,
And answer made, and amity begun.
On the proud fields and on her proud bent head
The sunlight like a covenant did fall;
Then with a gesture rich and liberal
She raised her hands with laughter to the sun, —
And it was done,
Never in life or death to be gainsaid!
And I, till then,
Home-come yet alien,
Held by some thwart and skeptic mind aloof
From nature's dear behoof,
Knelt down in heart and kissed the kindly earth,
And, having swept on wings of mirth
The big horizon round, I swiftly clomb,
And from the utter dome
Of most high morning laughed, and sang my loved
one home!
Meanwhile, within the rings our laughter made,
Bending like a water-arum
Where impetuous waters meet,
Rhythmic to the strong alarum,
Of her horse's rushing feet,

Before me and beside me and on before me swayed
Her body like a water-arum blade,
Like a slanted gull for motion,
And the blown corn like an ocean
For its billows and their rumor, and the tassels snapping free
As whittled foam and brine-scud of the sea.
Thanks to God,
No ocean, but the rife and homely sod,
And golden corn to feed
A universe at need!
Land of mine, my mother's country!
My heritage! — But through her loosening hair
She has tossed me back the dare.
Drunken-hearted! shall it be a race indeed?
Then drink again, and drink again, to reeling drink the winy speed!

III

Ye on the jealous hills,
Ye shall not have your wills
For many a dreaming day
And haunted night.
To that high morning, walled and domed with light,

I am given away;
And often here, above the weary feet
That pour along this fierce and jaded street,
As from a taintless source
Of power and grace,
Anxious and shrill and sweet
I hear her strong unblemished horse
Neigh to the pastured mothers of the race.

SONG

My love is gone into the East
Across the wide dawn-kindled sea;
My love remembreth naught of me
Nor of my lips nor of my breast,
For he has gone where morning dwells
Into the land of dreams and spells.

But yet sometimes deep in the night
A foolish little cricket thing,
A kind of voice, will wake and sing
And drone and sing till it is light;
I am not sure, but every day
I grow to think he sings this way: —

"Into the West, or late or soon,
Across dim seas into the West,
Thy lover will sail back in quest
Of Earth's one gift and life's one boon,
Of simple love that comes to pass
As dew falls or as springs the grass."

MUSA MERETRIX

I TURN the last leaf down, and lay
The flaunting rubbish in the grass;
With folded arms across my face
I shut the summer light away.
On him too the old trick to play!
    Too dull, too base!

I see again his dream-worn hand
Shaken by my poor praise, his brow
Flushed by the words I scarce knew how
To speak at all, so shadowy grand
He stalked there in Song's lonely land,
    Under the vow.

So rare a spirit, and if frail —
Curse thee! what should a spirit be
That ate not, drank not, save for thee?
Flat brothel-jestress, thing of sale,
On his head too to pour the stale
    Indignity!

THE COUNTING MAN

I

Eeny, meeny, miney, mo,
Cracka feeny, finey, fo;
Omma nooja, oppa tooja,
Rick, bick, ban, do!

II

Eeny, meeny, miney, mo, —
All the children in a row.
Cracka feeny, who is he,
Counting out so solemnly?

III

Eeny, meeny, look how tall,
Like a shadow on the wall!
When did he come down the street,
Muffled up from head to feet?

IV

Listen! Don't you hear the shiny
Shadow-man count meeny-miney?
Hush! when all the counting's done
Maybe I might be The One!

V

Cracka feeny, finey, fo,
Watch his shining fingers go!
He can see enough to play,
Though he hides his face away.

VI

Oppa tooja, rick, bick, ban,
O the solemn Counting Man!
Forty-'leven from the top —
Now where *will* his fingers stop?

VII

Eeny, meeny, miney, mo,
Cracka feeny, finey, fo;
Omma nooja, oppa tooja,
Rick, bick, ban, do!

THE MOON-MOTH

AGAIN the steep path turns, and pained at heart
With prescience of the beauty soon to be,
Climbing I break the flowering weeds apart
And the low vines that mat about my knee,
Till airy-strong against the sky and sea
Juts out the fragment of a temple's base
And one great corner-stone.
Deep, deep, within me, in some deepest place
Of unknown being, laughter wakes, and moans,
As on the marble ledge I lay my face,
Bowed down with thoughts of Her who had this house and throne.

Above the market and the popular well
Within whose carven niche the old men sat
To murmur at Medea, and to tell
How her witch-love for Jason turned to hate,
High o'er the struggles old men wonder at,
High in the delicate heavens, beheld of none
Save who should climb above
Yonder hill-fountain where Bellerophon

Snared the winged horse and backed him in the moon, —
Corinth the city raised up unto Love
This specular temple pure and its far-gazing grove;

That in the intense zenith laughing free,
Making inviolable light its screen,
Passion might know a wilder secrecy,
To an abandonment more wounding lean,
More richly healing of a hurt more keen;
That, high in prospect of all Hellene story,
Love, which will gather power
From all it sees of beauty and of glory,
And on the top of every lifted hour
Stand singing of itself as from a tower,
Might stand and sing at ease from this bright promontory.

Temple and grove are gone; the summit lies
Bare to the feet of the fantastic year.
Weeds of strange flower, and moths of many dyes,
Creepers and flyers small, that, watched anear,
Are as outlandish gods and things of fear
Seen at their amorous revels and their wars —

These only keep the height,
These and the jeweled air that laps and jars
In tide and gulf-stream of ecstatic light,
Through pale gold deeps, whereof no ripple mars
Outspreaded Greece flame-pale and more than earthly bright.

Those faint vermilion hills that southward peer
Look over into Clytemnestra's land,
As if each crouching summit leaned to hear
White-lipped Cassandra, by Apollo banned
To drink with cries of loathing from his hand
Her horrid vision of the house of sin;
Those heights of flame and dew,
Gleaming far westward, lock Arcadia in;
And where the olive-mottled gulf burns blue,
The Muses' mount, with silver summits twin,
Shines o'er the violet steep that Delphi clings unto.

Yonder a name, yonder a name, and yonder
A name to make the troubled blood beat fast
And the o'ertaken spirit ache with wonder:
Daphne, whose slope the spring-time revelers passed,

With Eleusinian Demeter to taste
The bread of resurrection; Sunion,
Glad shrine and pharos glad;
Hymettos and grape-dark Pentelicon;
And bright, O bright against their bronzen shade,
Athens, by time and ruin undismayed,
Lifting her solemn crown of temples to the sun.

Mountains and seas, cities and isles and capes,
All frail as dream and painted like a dream,
All swimming with the fairy light that drapes
A bubble, when the colors curl and stream
And meet and flee asunder. I could deem
This earth, this air, my dizzy soul, the sky,
Time, knowledge, and the gods
Were lapsing, curling, streaming lazily
Down a great bubble's rondure, dye on dye,
To swell the perilous clinging drop that nods,
Gathers, and nods, and clings, through all eternity.

We cry with drowsy lips how life is strange,
And shadowy hands pour for us while we speak
Old bowls of slumber, that the stars may range
And the gods walk unhowled-at. . . . To my
cheek

This stone feels blessèd cool. My heart could
break
Of its long searching and its finding not,
But that it has forgot
What 't was it searched, and how it failed thereof.
— O soft, ye flute-players! No temple dove
Be fluttered! Soft, sing soft, ye lyric girls,
Till the shrine portals ope and the blue smoke
outcurls!

Dance slowly, singing as if Pindar heard
And loved again this sweet fruit of his breast.
O let the strophe, like a smooth sea-bird,
Drift down the wave, and wheel again to rest
One long, long instant on the glittering crest.
Scare not the sacred peacock where he spreads
His fan upon the wall;
Let not a flower, let not a petal fall
From those fresh-woven garlands on your heads;
Dance delicately slow as yon light treads
From isle to isle: though late, love comes at last
to all!

And might it not be sweeter late than soon?
What though the western radiance flame and fail?

What though the ivory circle of the moon
Deepen to gold? What though the keen stars tell
Through Heaven's abysm their midnight and all's-well,
And still not yet the jealous doors unclose?
Despair not; these delays
We know are Paphian, and the waked thrush knows
Who from the grove chants love's heart-broken praise.
"Too late, too soon! Too soon, too late!" he says,
"O goddess, hear them now, before the sweet night goes!"

Aye, deeply heard! In Aphrodite's porch
Perfect of her the slumbering lovers lie,
And on the shrine steps where her saffron torch,
Lights their young bosoms when they turn and sigh,
And in the moonlit grove, and round the high
Plinth, where her fiery urns purpureal
Signal her native deep;
To these she giveth all things, even sleep.
But, rich, rich giver, hast thou given all?

Dost thou not some diviner secret keep
For me, though outland, though half-atheist in
thy hall?

— Shattered! And I awake. The prayer was
rash.
Daylight is hardly touched with failure yet,
Though there a glowing headland drops to ash
And there a chanting island will forget
Its glory soon. The stones with dew are wet.
The moon sings up the world — or in my blood
Climbs it, the choiring peace?
What have I done, what suffered or withstood,
That all within me is so bright and good?
— Look, lo, the rainbow-colored pinions please
To settle! A moon-moth, by all my dreams it is!

Rich as a pulse a worshiped head rests on,
The glimmering vans that time the trembling life
Open and close above the moon-washed stone,
As if the fairy heart were fugitive,
As if it halted panting from a strife
Too large for its frail day. O missionary
Winds of the far and dear!
O elfin ship, why flap your gallants there?

My heart has many a brimming estuary
Where you can ease you from the endless air,
The ocean light you sailed to bring me news of
her!

Our souls had risen from their second birth,
And were at peace within the land thereof;
With tears we trod there, and with careless mirth:
And sometimes on the bosom of my love,
Or on her lips or brow, or poised above
All palpitant and doubtful on her head,
A soft-winged splendor lit;
And I would say, "The Butterfly!" and sit
Loving it till it went. And once I said
"Hush, the Moon-Moth!" That evening we were
wed
Anew, and we were glad as the uprisen dead.

And now, what gladness ails thee now, my soul?
For all the desolate, all the wasted days
Nothing but strong delight? The lifted bowl,
The cones of ecstasy, the wands of praise,
Tossing delirious down the mountain ways
Of all that's forfeit, all that is foregone?
Triumphing through the seas,

And past the ghostly power that, leagued with these,
Did make as if the bolts of God were drawn
Between her life and me? And like a fawn
Thou 'lt dance there in the moon, where now the
moon-moth flees?

But whither, flame of pearl, vapor of pearl,
Breath and decantment of sea-buried gems
That with the foam-born Woman did upswirl
To wreathe their brightness round her breast and
limbs
And give their color to the cup that dims
Earth's piercing cry to music, — whither now
Do the weighed wings intend?
Fawn heart of me, that with the upflung brow
Followest on, where will thy dances end?
O after many days! O let me bow,
Let me be risen lordly up! My love, my friend,

My wild one, my soul's need, my song of life!
Through the strange seas and past the ghostly
powers
Safe come and sure, and like a festal wife,
Admonished of the seasons and the hours,
The time of times and the preparèd bowers!

Above thy brow floats like an influence
The moon-moth, our dear sign,
No plainer now than when these eyes of mine
In faith imagined and beheld it once,
As these thy hands to all my thirsting sense,
To lips and breast and brow, are palpable as then.

More palpable, by that dark curtain wove
And hung between us for Earth's lie of lies!
Which these our meeting hands make nothing of
And this thy happy bending-down denies,
And these our clinging lips and closèd eyes
And mating breasts have never, never known
But for the cheat it was.
— Sigh not, love; tremble not! Be all at peace!
You will not go because the moth is flown?
— Gone, beyond passion's cry! — The moon-washed stone,
The sleeping weeds, the stars few over dreaming Greece.

And my far country swims into the light.
The seaboard states are up, the prairies stay
But little longer now to make them bright.
Westward the burning bugles of the day

Are blowing strong across America.
New laws, new arts, new gods, new souls of men,
New hopes and charities!
Why do I traffic where no profit is,
Taking but one or two where they take ten
Who trade to their own shores, and back again
To their own shores? O my beloved! Who replies

But thou, fled heart, who cling'st here close and
true!
For us the future was, the past will be,
And all the holy human years are new,
And all are tasted of eternally,
And still the eaten fruit shines on the tree.
— Let us go down. There, in that naked glen,
Bellerophon played the thief.
Much lower lies the well where the old men
Sat murmuring at Medea, and at their chief
Spoused to the witch. Love, we'll not grieve
again,
We ne'er shall grieve again, not what we could
call grief!

THE FOUNTAIN

ANOTHER evening falls, another leaf
Drops from the withered bough. Here let us rest
Till dawn, if still another dawn be ours,
And these be not the limits of our hopes.
This desert starlight seems to shale away
The crust and rind of our disfigurement,
And I can see us on the palm-fringed shore,
Young, in a land of virgin miracle.
With laughter and light words we burnt the ships,
And waited while the morning jewel-pure
Between the flaming zenith and the sea
Drank up the smoke, and left all crystalline.
Then, after prayer and planting of the cross,
Our captain rose, and o'er us where we kneeled
Let stream the ensign of our strange attempt.
With shout and song we took the wilderness,
Light song which in the arrogance of joy
Mocked all the shadowy issues of our search.
— Wondrously near those first days rise to-night
Bright-pictured to the visionary sense,
And like a stepping music, full of gust

And savorous to the marrow of the tune.
But dim and without sound, a realm inert,
Lie the long stretches of our after-toil.
You know how hunger, accident, disease,
Ambush and open battle wore us down,
How schism split us, envious leadership
Ditched into rivulets of little head
The stream and onset of our expedition;
How some for love of women, some for sloth,
Some for a taint of wildness in the blood,
Some brain-sick, or with dreams of savage rule,
Fell off from us and mingled with the tribes.
You know how, when the knighthood we were of
Was broken, when despair was in the ranks,
And the main voice was loud for turning back,
This handful, heroes of a dwindling hope,
Bade deep farewell, and set our faces on.
Long, long ago the others found their kin,
Wept in the shrunken bosoms of their wives,
And leaned their weight of weakness on their sons,
Or else, not fortunate, sank by the way,
With eyes turned homeward, and delirious hands
Held up through the death-mist to signal Spain.
But we, who now out-tarry our own selves,

Who are as our own spectres haunting us,
Many a dim immemorable year
We grope about, at hazard of our clue;
Again and yet again the thin thread snaps,
The half-heard rumor dies upon the air;
Then sit we drowsed, forgetting what we seek,
Again remembering only to forget,
Till, in some wakeful moment such as this,
Or such as come under the struggling dawn,
When earth is taken with anxiety,
And till the crisis all the gates of life
Swing wide, and there is access everywhere
And mighty recognitions, then once more —
I know not how ye others keep the quest,
I know not on what root of hope ye feed,
But as for me, the voices that I hear,
The beckoning hands I follow, are of them
Whom you reject as false and lying guides.
Again I see that dark-eyed leaf-crowned boy,
That tawny budding girl, earnest and vague,
Who took our meaning with soft-brightening gaze,
And beckoning slipped before us through the wild;
And like a fountain on the hills of dream
Wells the clear music of their mated throats,
Now rising from the maiden's single heart,

Now from the youth's, rejoicing far away,
But ever wedded in the secret depths
And raining up inextricable song.

"*Hasten, hasten, turn and twine*
Body mine, spirit mine,
Spells behind me,
Lest he follow me and find me!
Never stay, but as we may
Fleeing, fleeing, bar the way;
To my love's delicious moan
Make the air no thoroughfare,
Lock the light to stone!
By the heavenly pool to-day,
Body mine, spirit mine,
We must bathe, we must play
Alone, alone!"

"*I knew not when I rose from thee,*
I only knew
That on from tree to dreaming tree
All the wet, dark forest through
I touched and traced the fairy clew.
Upland silences unstirred
By wind of dawn

Or wakeful bird,
With signals wan and unaverred
Led me, lured me, lulled me on,
To where a brook or little river
Bubbled from a Source divine —
O, by many a mighty sign
Sealed and set apart forever
Mine, mine!"

Again I listened to that married pair,
Who laid their hands upon the giant trees,
Saying, "When these were seedlings, we were far
Gone in the wonder and the peace of love,"
Yet seemed young as the bloom they led us through.
And I can hear again the husband's song
At which the woman clung to him and wept,
And after seemed more blessèd than before.

"*Dost thou fear, my bride, to dwell*
Longer near the wondrous well,
Where we, careless leaning,
Drank and were glorified?
Stirs and flutters in thy side,
Love, the sweet meaning
Why we abide,

Here where the waters flow
Till the heart-prophecied hour!
When with tears of weakness, songs of power,
We have knelt the stream beside,
And poured the chrysm wild
Over our deathless child,
Then we will go —
O whither, whither, love, seeking our child that died!"

Yea, yea, I know to what unlikely springs,
To what mere household wells and neighbor brooks
Some led us, saying, "Here by chance we drank
And suffered the bright change; stoop ye and drink!"
Also I know how others stood at loss,
Saying, "'T was here, 't was such a place as this;
But nowhere wells the water. Blame us not!
Perhaps it has its seasons!" Seasons four
We waited once, and when the fourth was run
We put our guide to death — unrighteously!
For look you, but a little after that,
Upon the monstrous borders of this place,
We met the ancient comrades of our quest.
A lifetime since, they fell away from us

And mingled with the tribes. Nine souls we met,
Seven thereof as old and worn as we,
And with them women-kind more broken still;
But two were more divine uplifted men
Than when we knelt beside the burning ships.
You know how, at our question, one spake naught,
But wept, and gave us mutely of his store,
Filling our hands with precious necessaries;
The other, from our vasty mountain shelf,
Pointed far westward over silver peaks.
Then she who went beside him as his bride
Smiled and said Nay to the uplifted arm;
Yet followed where he led us. Twelve days march
By west and north we journeyed, through a world
Gigantic and phantasmal, as if flung
In terror of their fancy from the hands
Of rude and early gods. And as we went,
Ever before us that bright woman sang
Many a bright, disturbing song, whereof
One was the strangest among many strange.

"I saw a thousand gates unclose,
A risen woman in each gate;
Each woman cried, 'For thee I rose:
Waitest thou? I can wait!'

"I scared the stars above the sun,
I shook the old roots of the sea,
The anchored continents did shun
My importunity.

"I cried, 'I will not suffer death,
Nor shameful age, the death in life!
What from our love God hidden hath
Be wrung from Him with strife!'

"In faintness once again I lay,
And saw those gates unclose about me,
I heard the thousand women say
'How long, then, wilt thou doubt me?

"'For thee, I rose, for thee I wait
Who am thyself, long, long uprisen;
Come to the Fountain; it is late;
And darker grows thy prison!'

"All mutinous thoughts away I flung,
And I, a risen woman, trod
Those liberties where gushed and sung
The living wells of God."

So, for twelve days, her singing led us on:
The twelfth day, in the fading light, we came

Into a region where the laboring earth
Spouted whale-like her fountains, icy some
And clear as ice, some boiling sulphurous.
Then, by the master-water in the midst,
He who far off had pointed out the land
Halted us, saying, "Here I drank; drink ye!"
And when we drank and found no virtue in it,
He muttered, "Even as the other seven!"
And beckoning his bright woman, slipped away.
But he, our other comrade, who had wept
To see us, and had followed without speech,
Broke silence then, and as the mountain dusk
Shut over them, we heard his lessening song
Mix with the pouring waters and the wind.

"*Not with searching, not with strife,*
Not by traveler's true reporting,
Nor by signs of old importing,
Win ye to the Fount of Life.
But as the husband to the wife
At evening thoughtless goes,
And lo, about her careless head
Twines terror like a flashing knife,
Breathes wonder like a climbing rose,
And dreams wherewith his youth was rife,

The sorrowed-for, the long-since dead,
He finds up-gathered in her eyes
Beyond belief, beyond surprise —
So shall ye find, not otherwise!
For ere with striving you are come
The fountain's singing heart is dumb,
Faded its spell;
And down the world at random hurled
By conduits and thwart understreams,
The secret waters of the well —
Where the thirsty millions dwell
Or 'neath unvisited moonbeams —
Renew their miracle!"

To-morrow morn, yet fewer than to-night,
We will go on, leaving the fallen head.
These peaceful desert men will give it honor.
From moon to moon they hold us more in awe,
And as they deal with their outlying gods, —
Them of the farther fields and water-holes,
Too shy to climb into their rock-perched towns
So do they unto us, in lonely places
Setting us sacred food, honey and maize,
Sun-baken fruits and sacrificial bread.
I think there have been battles waged for us,

And vigil set in all their eagle-towers;
I think their priests come with us afar off,
Staying when we stay, moving when we move:
Either 't is so, or 't is a thing I dream.

Though order and the comeliness of truth
No more reign constant in the spirit's house,
Though far and near shift places, and our sleep
Tangles itself with what we are awake,
Yet, O worn brothers, much-enduring men,
Without search, without striving, go we on,
For I am told at heart that we shall find! . . .
Perhaps within the pictured water-jars
They fill and place for us along our path;
Perhaps in stooping where the wild and tame
Fight for the thread of moisture in the rocks;
Perhaps as ghosts beside the ghostly lakes
Which noonday paints upon the distant sand;
Perhaps far sunken by a canyon pool,
Under the soft rein of a cataract
Which leaps and scatters down the walls of Death.

THAMMUZ

Daughters, daughters, do ye grieve?
Crimson dark the freshes flow!
Were ye violent at eve?
Crimson stains where the rushes grow!
What is this that I must know?

Mourners by the dark red waters,
Met ye Thammuz at his play?
Was your mood upon you, daughters?
Had ye drunken? O how grey
Looks your hair in the rising day!

Mourners, mourn not overmuch
That ye slew your lovely one.
Such ye are; and be ye such!
Lift your heads; the waters run
Ruby bright in the climbing sun.

Raven hair and hair of gold,
Look who bendeth over you!
This is not the shepherd old;
This is Thammuz, whom ye slew,
Radiant Thammuz, risen anew!

POETIC DRAMAS

THE FIRE-BRINGER

And when Zeus determined to destroy the men of the brazen age, Deukalion, being forewarned by Prometheus, built a boat, and putting into it food and drink, embarked with Pyrrha. Zeus sent a great rain from heaven, so that all men were overwhelmed, except a few who fled to the high places. Deukalion was driven upon the darkness of the waters until he came to Parnassus; and there, when the rains had abated, he landed and made sacrifice, praying for men to re-people the earth. Then Deukalion and Pyrrha took stones, and threw them over their heads; those which Deukalion threw became men, and those which Pyrrha threw became women. . . . Also Prometheus gave to them fire, bringing it secretly in a fennel stalk. When Zeus learned of this, he commanded Hephæstos to bind the body of Prometheus upon Mount Caucasus; and for the theft of fire Prometheus suffered this punishment. — APOLLODORUS.

The Fire-Bringer is intended as the first member of a trilogy on the Promethean theme, of which *The Masque of Judgment* is the second member; but the connection between the present poem and the one which follows it in the dramatic sequence is informal, and the action of each is complete in itself.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Prometheus
Pandora
Deukalion
Pyrrha
Æolus
Lykophon
Alcyone
Rhodope
The Stone Men
The Earth Women
A Priest of Zeus

Various persons, survivors of Deukalion's flood.

THE FIRE-BRINGER

ACT I

Darkness covers the scene. Faintly discernible, a mountain slope, backed by low cliffs, and beyond these the upper stretches of the mountain. In the cliffs a small cave, and before the mouth of the cave a rude altar of earth. Deukalion and Pyrrha are seated against the cliff; Æolus lies on his face at their feet.

DEUKALION.

Thou hast slept long.

PYRRHA.

I saw a burning lamp
That passed between the levret and the dove
On Zeus's altar, and a smoke went up.

DEUKALION.

Dreams: we are old. The green heart and the sear
He feeds with dreams; having some purpose in it,
Or else His idleness.

PYRRHA.

No lamp was here?
No fire, no light?

DEUKALION.

Some fire-sparks in the eyes
Of dull bewildered beasts that came to gaze,
And dully moved again into the mist.
They have forgot their natures, even as we,
And those who tremble yonder on the heights
For fear the ebbing deep should mount again,
Breathing this darkness have forgot ourselves,
Our natures, and the motions of our souls.

PYRRHA.

Was not the Titan here? Seemed as he stood,
Behind him dawn, and in his lifted hand —

DEUKALION.

He came, in darkness.

PYRRHA.

What word should he bring?

DEUKALION.

I feigned to sleep. I had no heart for speech.

PYRRHA.

What did he, being with us?

DEUKALION.

Stood awhile
Watching thy slumber; touched the sleeping head

Of Æolus; gazed upward to the heights;
Then vanished down the slope: and far below
Pandora sang.

PYRRHA.

Again? —

DEUKALION.

I say below
I heard her once, and once upon the peaks.
A little after, thunder tore the sky,
And 't was as if, far off, unearthly steeds
And cloudy chariots plunged across the dark.
Hush fell; and, wailing like a broken bird,
I heard her dropping down from rock to rock.
Then for an endless season sat she here,
Her head between her knees, and all her hair
Spread like a night-pool in the autumn woods.
Pause.

PYRRHA.

Since the loosed raven flew, nor came again,
And since the black wind ceasing cast us here,
How long should the time be?

DEUKALION.

A week, a month,
Measureless years, some moments. Time is dead,

Drowned in the waste of waters; or it lies
Somewhere abolished in the primal mud,
Caught in the rings of Python, whom at dusk
Of that last day, peering in terror forth
Before we shut the windows of our boat,
We heard hiss from the north and from the south,
And from the east and west, and saw him lay
His circles round the frothy rim of the world;
Or fled above the dark, Time softly there
Laughs through the abyss of radiance with the gods.

PYRRHA.

Think'st thou the gods laugh, now the colored world
They sought to when the spring was on the hills,
And had their stolen loves here, lies snuffed out,
A reeking lamp?

DEUKALION.

Also therefore they laugh:
And therefore also do we bow us down
In fear and worship.

PYRRHA.

Aye, so. — What sayest thou?

DEUKALION.

I say supernal laughter and smooth days
Fill up Heaven's golden room! For that the earth
Hath her dim sorrow and her shrouded face,
Should the gods grieve?

PYRRHA.

Husband, these breasts are dry
That fed our many sons; that head of thine
Is hoar with majesty of years and rule;
Much have I learned of thee and stored at heart
Concerning gods and men, the elder age
Of golden peace, the silver time between,
When lust and strife began to gnaw the world,
And these wild latter days. In the ark also,
Crouching in darkness, and upon this mount
Of weary darkness, hast thou held a torch
To light my mind to patience of these woes
Through understanding. Yet, behold, O king,
I understand not! Wherefore hath great Zeus,
Thy likeness in the heavens, bound like thee
To shepherd his wide people, sent his floods
To whelm them up, shut from the remnant clans
Sun, moon, and stars; and for a final curse
Drawn from the flints and dry boughs of the pine

The seed of divine fire, — yea, from our blood,
Yea, from the secret places of our frames
Sucked up the fire of passion and of will,
And left us here by the desolate black ebb
To rot and crumble with the crumbling world?
Wherefore is this, O king?

DEUKALION.

Thyself hast said.

PYRRHA.

Yet know not. — Heavy of thought! Make me to know.

DEUKALION.

Because these latter days are full of pride
And lust and wrangling; because his skies were vexed
With the might of rearing horses, and the wheels
Of chariots, and the young men blowing horns
Against his citadel; because the south
In all its chambers laughed a grievous red
Out of the vineyards of its wantonness;
Because our fitful pulses, when they fell,
Sang grief, division, terror, shame, and loss,
Troubling that harmony which is the breath

Of the gods' nostrils, yea the delicate tune
To which they pace their souls, and act with joy
Their several ministries.

PYRRHA.

Why then so long
Do these flat slugs, that once were statured men,
Cling to the oozy earth-rind He would cleanse
For some new perfect race? Why, when thou heard'st
Prometheus whisper thee his fearful news
That evening by the farm-gate, did'st thou grant
No sleep to slave or free, till from the hills
The mighty pines were dragged, the hull-beams laid,
The roof-tree raised, the doors and windows set,
And through the muttering thunder all thy house
Led in to safety? When the holy fire,
Brought by thine own hands from the hearth, went out,
Why did'st thou bare thy white head to the storm
To fetch another brand, and, finding none,
Come forth with lamentation? Why were seen,
Through all thy mountain kingdom, runners stripped,

And panted words, and flying to the peaks?
Thou answerest not; but leaning darkly down
Over the head of little Æolus,
Fingerest a tarnished lock from out the dust!
Speak, father! Through this numbing gloom, this death,
This veil of years, thy silence pierceth me.

DEUKALION.

I try to feel again the thing I felt,
But cannot, so the sinews of my soul
Are loosened. Yet 't was for this radiant head
That all was done defiantly toward God.
His father Hellen and our other sons
Were wandering, or had poured their lifeblood out
In obscure battle. This alone was left,
This little flower of Greece, for whom I dreamed
Kingdoms and glories, plaudits, trophies, palms,
And sound of deathless lyres across the world.
For his sake, fumbling in the gloom I built
This altar, and have groped about the rocks
For live thing worthy sacrifice; have lain
In bush and hollow till some dreaming bird
Or sleep-besotted beast fell to my hands,

And rent the same, and offered it with groans
Upon the smokeless altar.

PYRRHA.

Once He heard,
Thou knowest.

DEUKALION.

I know. We will not think thereon!

PYRRHA.

The unwrought shapes, the unmoulded attitudes!
The tongues of earth, the stony craving eyes!

DEUKALION.

Unto the husband was the wife's desire
No longer, nor the husband's to the wife.
The young maid lay undreamed on by the boy.
The little life that was, was sinking fast
Or sunk beyond recall. God's doubtful voice
Out of the wind of the oak was fair to hear,
Seeming to promise store of goodly men,
And women vessels for the flowing life
To enter and be spilled not. There was hope.
Prometheus said not nay. Beside the verge
Of the spent flood did we not see him stoop,
Kneading the clay in with the roilèd foam,

Breathing and breathing with his fiery breath,
Then cry upon his work, and scattering it
Rise up in haste and wrath? Yet here was hope!

PYRRHA.

Yea, as I flung the clods, and stooped and flung,
I dared not look behind, for hope; and thou,
Stooping and flinging the allotted stones,
Seemed clothed in prime of years, foreseeing earth
With a big breed replenished; till on a sudden
Terribly out of the gloom the Titan cried;
Then we, ceasing, beheld, and fled in fear.

DEUKALION.

Would they might sit as now, removed apart,
Brooding upon the ground; nor come again
With vague slow motion up the shrouded slope,
Filling the mist with formless utterance,
As craving to be born! My men of stone
In dreams appal me with their lifted hands
Of threat and supplication, and by thee
Stand the earth-women pleading.

PYRRHA.

Ere I slept
I was anhungered. Searching for sweet roots

I crawled and groped my way, till I was come
Unto a brackish water cupped and held
From that same sea whereof the gurge but then
Lessened its roar far down the craggèd dark.
There by the pool they sat, with faces lift
And brows of harsh attention; in their midst
Pandora bowed, and sang a doubtful song,
Its meaning faint or none, but mingled up
Of all that nests and housekeeps in the heart,
Or puts out in lone passion toward the vast
And cannot choose but go.

DEUKALION.

In mockery sent,
In mercy be she taken, or on the hills
Drinking this darkness, wither and be changed
To such as we are!

PYRRHA.

Thinkest thou that Zeus
In anger made her thus?

DEUKALION.

'T will be so. When she came
Our minds were dim and fearful.

PYRRHA.

Very dim,
And blurred with fearful dream; but—By the boat
We crouched, and hearkened if the water still
Drew downward, or was crawling up again
To seize us unaware; the mist was full
Of beasts and men in wretched fellowship;
Then suddenly a breath like morning blew;
I saw as 't were a shadowy sun and moon
Go up the blinded sky; far off yet near
I heard Prometheus speaking, and her voice
In low and happy answer.

DEUKALION.

He would catch
The hurlèd thunder-bolt, and forge from it
A reaper's hook; the vials of white wrath
He spills to make a wine-cup for a feast;
Curses he knows not from the gifts of love;
And in the shadow of this death, even here,
As low as from her pitch of pride earth's fallen,
He will be plotting that whereby to climb
And lift us high above the peaks of God
One dizzy instant, ere we fall indeed
And he with us forever!

PANDORA.

Sings, below.

Along the earth and up the sky
The Fowler spreads his net:
O soul, what pinions wild and shy
Are on thy shoulders set?
What wings of longing undeterred
Are native to thee, spirit bird?

PYRRHA.

Hearken, is't not
Her song again? Far down among the vales
Did'st hear it? Faint and far, but — Hearken still!

PANDORA.

Sings.

What sky is thine behind the sky,
For refuge and for ecstasy?
Of all thy heavens of clear delight
Why is each heaven twain,
O soul! that when the lure is cast
Before thy heedless flight,
And thou art snared and taken fast
Within one sky of light,

Behold, the net is empty, the cast is vain,
And from thy circling in the other sky the lyric laughters rain!

DEUKALION.

Through the gorge there — a shadow — Pyrrha, look!
Over the torrent bed and up the slope
Something comes on, in stature more than man,
And swifter.

PYRRHA.

O swift-comer, it is thou!
None other, thou, wind-ranger, bringer-in!
Child, be awake! Prometheus!

PROMETHEUS.

Entering, lifts Pyrrha.

Do not so;
These hands come poor; these feet bring nothing back.

PYRRHA.

Thy hands come filled with thee, thy feet from thence
Have brought thee hither; it is gifts enough.

DEUKALION.

Is there no hope?

PYRRHA.

Speak! speak! Through this dark cloud
The eyes of Zeus's eagle cannot pierce
Or any listener heed. Have we a hope?

PROMETHEUS.

From earth and all this lower realm of air
The fire is gone.

PYRRHA.

Thy searchings! — Giveth ease
If but to hear thy voice.

PROMETHEUS.

Seats himself beside the cliff.

I clambered down
Old earthquake-cloven rifts and monstrous chasms
Where long ago the stripling Titans peered
At play and dared not venture, — found me out
Flint-stones so buried in disastrous rock
I thought the Darkener sure had passed them by;
But not a spark lived in them. Past the walls
Rhipean, and the Arimaspian caves,
I sought the far hyperborean day,
But not a banner of their rustling light
Flapped through the sagging sky, nor did the Fates

Once fling their gleaming shuttles east or west.
By Indian Nysa and the Edonian fount
Of Hæmus long I lurked, in hope to find
Young Dionysus as he raced along
And wrest his pine-torch from him, or to snare
Some god-distracted dancing ægipan,
And from his garland crush a wine of fire
To light the passion of the world again
And fill man's veins with music; but there went
A voice of sighing through the ghostly woods,
And up the mountain pastures in the mist
Desolate creatures sorrowed for the god.
Across the quenched Ægean, where of old
The shining islands sang their stasimon,
Forever chorusing great hymns of light
Round Delos, through the driving dark I steered
To seek Hephæstos on his Lemnian mount;
But found him not. His porches were o'erthrown,
His altar out, and round his faded peak
The toilèd Cyclops, bowing huge and dim,
Uncouthly mourned. . . .
He starts up, and gazes toward the mountain-top.
Soon will the smouldering life
Cease even to smoulder! I must forth again.
But where? But where?
Pause.

DEUKALION.

Where suppliants still must go,
But with the act of suppliance, and the mind.
Not stiff and rebel brows, not daring deeds
Be of availment, but to clasp the knees
And touch the beard of Zeus. Within his house
Still lives the sacred fire. 'T is there to have,
If one by sacrifice and rites full-brought
Could find the way.

PROMETHEUS.

Laughs. 'T is there to have; thou sayst!
One thistledown of fortune to the good
And 't had been ravished thence, an hour ago,
To better uses!

DEUKALION.

'T was but so long since
The thunder spake. Across the vault of heaven
Plunged down the shadowy furnishment of war.

PYRRHA.

Thou 'rt wounded! Lo, this arm hangs helpless by! —
O, rash and overbold! Thou — thou hast dared —
The hermæ holding vigil at Heaven's bound

Have cried thy name out, and the shadows vast
Of perished gods, beside the inmost hearth,
Have spoken of thee, that the soul of Zeus
Hath shook with dreams of evil to his house!

DEUKALION.

How might'st thou pass the terror of his ward,
Tread his serenest citadel, and come
Not thunder-blasted hither, with slight wound?

PROMETHEUS.

Flings himself again upon the ground.

When each great cycle of Olympian years
Rounds to its end, there comes upon the gods
Mysterious compulsion. As a gem
Borne from a lighted chamber into dusk,
Heaven of its splendor disarrays itself,
Hushes its dyes, and all the whispering sphere
Hangs like a moon of change. Knowing not why,
Nor unto what, each brooding deity
Wends to the sacred old Uranian field,
Where bloom old flowers, which, in the morn of
time,
Forgotten gods did garland for their hair,
To celebrate some long-forgotten joy
That then did pierce the heart of the young world.

Here gather they, with mute and doubtful looks
At one another, waiting till She comes,
Mnemosyne, mother of thought and tears,
Remembrancer, and bringer out of death
Burden of longing and sweet-fruited song.
Then toward the upper windows of the stars,
The roof and dome of things, the place supreme
Of speculation inward on the frame
Of life create, and outward on the abyss
That moans and welters in the wind of love,
She leadeth up their shining theory,
And there they stand and wonder on the time
When they were not and when they shall not be.
This was my moment; for I knew 't was near,
And laired away among the steep-up crags
That bastion and shore-fast his pearl of power,
His white acropolis. Soft as light I passed
The perilous gates that are acquainted forth,
The walls of starry safety and alarm,
The pillars and the awful roofs of song,
The stairs and colonnades whose marble work
Is spirit, and the joinings spirit also, —
And from the well-brink of his central court
Dipped vital fire of fire, flooding my vase,
Glutting it arm-deep in the keen element.

Then backward swifter than the osprey dips
Down the green slide of the sea, till — Fool, O fool!
'T was in my hands! 'T was next my bosom! Fierce
Sang the bright essence past my scorching cheek,
Blown up and backward as I dropped and skimmed
The glacier-drifts, cataracts, wild moraines,
And walls of frightful plunge. Upon the shore
Of this our night-bound wretched earth I paused,
Lifted on high the triumph of my hands,
And flung back words and laughter. As I dropped,
The dogs of thunder chased me at the heels,
A white tongue shook against me in the dark,
And lo, my vase was rended in my hands,
And all the precious substance that it held
Spread, faded, and was gone, — was quenched, was gone!

Pause.

DEUKALION.

In a low voice.

We cannot thank thee, though thy love be love.
Great is thy heart; we cannot praise thy deed.

PROMETHEUS.

It was not therefore done!

PYRRHA.

For our poor praise,
For our poor love and praise; albeit now
The shouting of thy loud blood drowneth all!

DEUKALION.

After a long silence.

Prometheus, thou hast thought to be our friend,
Our blood-kin, our indweller; hast indued
Vesture of our mortality and pain, —
Wherefore if not for pride, for fiercest pride?
Thou hast found out wild pathways for our treading,
Whispered us Nature's secrets, given to our hand
The spirit of fire and all its restless works,
Yea, blown aflame our all too eager blood
Till earth went red and reeling like a torch
When Dionysus calls under the moon.
Look round thee, O storm-sower, what we reap
Now in the season's fullness! Is it good?
Pride was thy lesson, and earth learned so well
That she is fallen more low than she was high.

PROMETHEUS.

And shall be higher than that height she was,
By all this depth she has fallen!

DEUKALION.

In that day
Let Chronos lift his old abolished head
From mid Lethean mallows, and dim-tongued
Call to thy shadowy brothers where they dream,
And leading up his faint forgetful host,
Rive the great diadem from Zeus's brow.
Then may thy stormy will at last be thine;
But as for now, even for thy earth's dear sake,
Be humble, O be humble! Bind thy hair
With willow, and put on the iron ring,
That so, by walking fearfully at last,
We bend Heaven from its anger. Else shall man
Suffer such woes as now we muse not of,
And thou such punishment as quails the heart
To think on.

PROMETHEUS.

Either now with violent hand
We snatch salvation home, or here we sit
Till Python, hissing softly up the dark,
Dizzy our lapsèd souls, and headlong down
We drop into his jaws, which from the first —
See, the boy wakes!

ÆOLUS.

Waking.

Give me to eat and drink.

PYRRHA.

Water and roots I hoarded in the cave.
I will go fetch them forth.
She goes into the cave.

DEUKALION.

Was 't well with thee
In slumber, child?

ÆOLUS.

I know not. I did sleep.

PYRRHA.

Coming out.
The roots are gnawed, and the sweet water spilled.
Be patient, Æolus, I will seek thee more.

DEUKALION.

Stay; let me fetch them rather. Thou wilt fall,
Or meet some fear. The sluggish serpents lie
And will not move, though trodden, save to sting.

PYRRHA.

Thou knowest not where the roots are still to find.

DEUKALION.

Rising painfully.

Together then. Ah, me! Where is thy hand?

PYRRHA.

Here, father. No, this way!

They go slowly out, feeling along the cliff.

PROMETHEUS.

Poor poisoned flower,
Poor droop-head, down again!

Stoops over Æolus.

Woe for the house,
Woe for the vineyard, woe for the orchard croft,
The oil-tree and the place of standing corn!
Woe for the ships of venture! Woe on Him
Who sows and will not gather; shame and woe
Who sendeth forth and when the message comes
Makes deaf and strange!

He sinks down beside the cliff.

O Mother Clymene,
What of the song-thrush and the morning star,
The moon deep-hung with increase down the dawn,
The wet fields brightening fast, the hour thy pangs
Came on thee for my sake? What of the earth

Thou loved'st so well and taught'st me well to love?
— Hears not! 'T was long ago.

His head falls upon his knees.

One deep, deep hour!
To drop ten thousand fathoms softly down
Below the lowest heaving of life's sea,
Till memory, sentience, will, are all annulled,
And the wild eyes of the must-be-answered Sphinx,
Couchant at dusk upon the spirit's moor,
Blocking at noon the highway of the soul,
At morn and night a spectre in her gates, —
For once, for one deep hour —

He lifts his head slowly, and peers into the darkness.

Say who ye are
That fill the night with deeper heaviness!
Break up your strangling circle and come out.
More, more, and wretcheder! A spirit pass
Into some old and unachievèd world,
A storm-fall in some wood of rooted souls!
But O, what spirit-piercing flower of life
Blooms from the wasteful heap?

From among the crouching figures of the Stone Men and Earth Women, Pandora's voice is heard.

PANDORA.

Sings.

Of wounds and sore defeat
I made my battle stay;
Wingèd sandals for my feet
I wove of my delay;
Of weariness and fear,
I made my shouting spear;
Of loss, and doubt, and dread,
And swift oncoming doom
I made a helmet for my head
And a floating plume.
From the shutting mist of death,
From the failure of the breath,
I made a battle-horn to blow
Across the vales of overthrow.
O hearken, love, the battle-horn!
The triumph clear, the silver scorn!
O hearken where the echoes bring,
Down the grey disastrous morn,
Laughter and rallying!

PROMETHEUS.

Thou! Is it thou?

PANDORA.

Comes from among the recumbent figures, holding something aloft.

Where is Prometheus?

PROMETHEUS.

I am I, thou knowest.

PANDORA.

I had a gift for him. Where is he gone?

PROMETHEUS.

Give me thy gift. 'T will bring Prometheus back
To the high home and fortress of his soul,
Where thou and he made gladness.
She gives him a fennel stalk.
What is this?

PANDORA.

A hollow reed. I found it on the hills.

PROMETHEUS.

Such used the mothers in the upland farms
Fetch unpolluted fire in, once a year,
To light their hearths anew; such would the girls
Crown with fir-cone and smilax when they heard

The frenzied pipe call in the midnight hills,
And whisperings of anguish dimmed their blood.

PANDORA.

Such had Prometheus, were he here again,
Wreathed for his listening earth; such had he filled
With unpolluted fire, and kindled new
The hearth-cheer of the world.

PROMETHEUS.

Earth, sea, and air,
The caverned clouds, the chambers of the storm,
Yea, the thrice perilous alps and crags of Heaven
Have watched the robber lurk, and laughed at
him!
Do not thou mock him too!

PANDORA.

Him I will mock
Who, being thirsty, climbs not to the spring,
But meanly drinks at rillet and low pool,
And thirsteth still the more.

PROMETHEUS.

The spring? The spring?
He hesitates, then starts up with a wild gesture.
I could have done it once! I could have done it!

PANDORA.

Coming nearer.
Stranger!

PROMETHEUS.

Hush, look! They rise at me again!

THE STONE MEN.

When earth did heave as the sea, at the lifting up of
the hills,
One said, "Ye shall wake and be; fear not, ye shall
have your wills."
We waited patient and dumb; and ere we thought
to have heard,
One said to us, "Stay!" and "Come!"—a dim and
a mumbled word.
Mortise us into the wall again, or lift us up that we
look therefrom!

THE EARTH WOMEN.

The night, the rain, and the dew from of old had
lain with us,
The suns and winds were our lovers too, and our
husbands bounteous:
But lo, we were sick at heart when we leaned from
the towers of the pine,

We yearned and thirsted apart in the crimson globes
of the vine.
O tell us of them that hew the tree, bring us to them
that drink the wine!
They disappear.

PROMETHEUS.

Only a moment did they strain their brows
In weary question at me, ere they turned
And melted down into the blotting dark!
He starts slowly down the slope.

PANDORA.

They go to find Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS.

Of these stones
To build my rumoring city, basèd deep
On elemental silence; in this earth
To plant my cool vine and my shady tree
Whose roots shall feed upon the central fire!
He turns to Pandora.
Love!

PANDORA.

Where thou goest, I am; there, even now
I stand and cry thee to me.

PROMETHEUS.

Starts again down the slope.

Yea, I come,
I come; to find somewhere through the piled gloom
A mountain path to unimagined day,
Build all this anger into walls of war
Not dreamed of, dung and fatten with this death
New fields of pleasant life, and make them teem
Strange corn, miraculous wine!

PANDORA.

Watching him disappear.

Prometheus, lord!

ACT II

Scene as before. The space below the cliffs is deserted; on the slope above, voices of men and women are heard.

FIRST VOICE.

Peer farther down! Hear'st thou the waters yet?

SECOND VOICE.

With sea-slime and with lichen-tangled shells
The rocks are strewn, and ocean-breathing things
Gasp in the shallow pools; but the main flood
Is sunken further than the ear can hark.
They descend.

A YOUNG MAN'S VOICE.

Above.
A little strength, sister, a little strength!
Nay then, I die with thee.

AN OLD MAN'S VOICE.

My son, my son,
Where art thou? Answer me!

ANOTHER VOICE.

Peace. He is dead.
I saw him sink upon the farther slope.
Back to him, if thou wilt; thou'lt come too late.

CHORUS OF MEN.

The fallen must lie where they fell,
For the dead cannot succor the dead.

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

O when through the valleys of hell
Shall the light of our Saviour be shed?
They descend. Others appear from above.

FIRST VOICE.

Above.
Trust not the sea! Look where the frothing lip
Curls off the giant fang! Back to the heights!

SECOND VOICE.

Nay, fallen are the waters. It is past.

THIRD VOICE.

The life we hurled from off the temple crag
With supplications and with piercing song,
Has made thus much appeasement. One more life

Will roll away the ocean of main dark;
Unless we be forever doomed to lie
As now, blind bulks of sleep, or hunger-bitten
To creep the stagnant bottom of the world.

FOURTH VOICE.

This way, 't is said, Deukalion carried him.
Follow on, yonder, where the cliff breaks down.

They descend; others follow. From the side, below the cliffs, a muttering group presses in; in their midst are Deukalion and Pyrrha, who shield Æolus against the cliff. The space about the altar is filled with indistinct figures.

DEUKALION.

I am king, hear ye, am I not the king?
Higher than I is none. Take me! Why him,
Little of strength and wisdom? I am wise,
My cunning brain is stronger than a host.
Though this my spear-arm be a little fallen
From when it led you out against the north,
I am more terrible and mighty now,
An old, much-seeing spirit. In my death
The gods will taste a pleasure and be soothed.
But from this child, this playmate — look ye
here —

This piece of summer's carelessness, this tuft
Of hyssop planted by the wells of glee, —
What honor should the dread gods have on him?
They shall have me, Deukalion —

A MAN'S VOICE.

Bring not on us
With wordy shifts, the last steep horror down!
That is no babe thy withered arm hides there.
We know him; we have seen. If he might live
His name would fill the future, and make big
The story of his folk. He is our best,
Our soul of price, and him the gods demand,
Together with the maid, whose father here —
O how much more a kinglier will than thou! —

DEUKALION.

Where art thou, Lykophon? Mine eyes are dim.

LYKOPHON.

Here by the altar.

DEUKALION.

And thy child?

LYKOPHON.

Here too.

DEUKALION.

Thy heart is firm to do it? Thou wilt live,
And think on 't after? Ay, remember that!
Hast weighed that with the rest?

LYKOPHON.

He was my slave,
Whose crazed old voice cried yonder of his son.
Was it to win a remnant of dim days,
A handful of poor mealtimes and to-beds,
He offered him? To watch some mornings rise,
Some evenings fall, fringing with fearful light
The cliff he hurled him from to the hungry sea?
Am I a lesser than my bondman is?

DEUKALION.

Yea, ye will teach me, and I 'll bear it tame!
I know what fits a king, what he must pay
In peace of soul and heart's blood for his folk.
King-drownling of an island of drowned dogs,
Wolves, snakes, and field-rats, crept from out the flood
For hunger and the hell-bred fog to rot!
Rot ye! I 'll keep my own.

LYKOPHON.

To the crowd.

Back, back, I say!
The gods despise enforcèd offerings.
When the heart brings its dearest and its last
Then only will they hear — if then, if then!

DEUKALION.

Be this life taken, what is left? O friends,
O wretched children, lift your hearts and eyes,
Look through the death-dark hither and be known
On what you ask; think on yourselves, on me,
On them that keep the heights, and who lie strewn
Along the downward path. See how the price
Doth shame the purchase!

A MAN'S VOICE.

We have thought on these,
And find they are our brothers and our friends,
Our parents, children, wives; and that they die.

LYKOPHON.

Not they alone. The past, the future dies.

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

Hark what he says! He knows not, yet he says!
None of you know. I have cried unto you

And told you of it, but you will not know!
You will not listen what I carry here
Under my heart, and feed and shelter now,
That then shall be the bread and wine of the world,
The torch and sword and lyre, the water-brook,
The lion-gate and wall of many towers,
The marshaler of dances, — there, O there
Beyond the shadow and the sorrow, far
In God's new garden, his green virgin mount!

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

Would, would we might be silent, for we know
Though now He puts us by,
Though now He heeds us not nor hearkeneth,
The groping of our anguish up the sky
Will wean and wear Him so
That in the vexèd sendings of his breath
He will breathe out a deeper than the gloom
Of our deep doom,
And put in death a sting sharper than death.
Distant thunder.

CHORUS OF MEN.

Seize them and stifle up their irking lips!
He grudgeth at us, but forgetteth where
He felt our spreaded palms, and was aware

Of fierce and tedious prayer.
Yonder of us night darkens with his frown;
Far off, and all forgetfully He drips
His drowsy anger down.

The thunder rolls nearer, and terrific storm sweeps over the scene.

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

Ah, no, He smiteth us! His lightning leaps
From end to end of the world!

A MAN'S VOICE.

His thunder shakes
The pillars of the dark. Lo, up above
The roof of darkness ruins and lets in
Thrice horrible night!

ANOTHER VOICE.

Alas, the wind, the wind!
The trampling and the bellowing herds of rain
Loose on the mountain slopes! Bow down! Bow down!

DEUKALION.

Gropes forward through the tempest and lifts Æolus upon the altar.

Lord, stretch thy hand and take him! He is thine.

LYKOPHON.

What criest thou, Deukalion?

DEUKALION.

Take the child.
The gods' dark will be done! I am content.
He falls.

LYKOPHON.

Bending over him.
Deukalion!

PYRRHA.

Husband! Father! Speak, look up!

LYKOPHON.

Rising.
The king is down. Here in his mighty room
I stand up over you! Where is the priest
Who serves the altar on God's mountain top?

A MAN'S VOICE.

Yonder he crouches, and his sacred eyes
Are set athwart; he wanders in his wit.

LYKOPHON.

Prepare him for his ministry. . . . And thou,
Alcyone, sweet head! Thou keepsake life

Left me for memory, thou precious seal
Stamped with her mystic love-sign unto me,
I put her blessing on thee; and do thou
Kiss me, and put her blessing upon me
For this I do.
He lifts her upon the altar.
Weep not. — Room for the priest!
The priest advances, holding the sacrificial knife.

PYRRHA.

Flings herself before the altar.
Hold off your hands, hold off! The king is fallen,
And falling spake somewhat. But I, who drank
Of his deep will, who ever was and am
His heart's high furtherer, cry over him
Ye shall not touch them yet! Not yet ye shall!
Not till Prometheus comes or makes a sign!

LYKOPHON.

Thou see'st the grey eternities of time
That we have waited, till our minds are crazed
With watching, and our all o'er-hearkened ears
Hear silence roar and mutter like a sea;
And still he comes not, and no word comes past
The crouching places and close lairs of death.

A MAN'S VOICE.

Yet he will come: his haughty soul shall not
Be hindered of its walk.

PRIEST.

Behind the wall
A thief was taken, and his sons at dawn
Said, "Now he comes with purchase; we will feast," —
Even while the ravens on his glazing eyes
Were feasted, and the master of the house
Said, "I have judged him and forgotten him."
Ye blind and credulous, ye whispering things!
Mutterers, collusioners! What wait we for?

CHORUS OF WOMEN.

O that our spirits might not thus
Afflict us, making pictures on the dark,
And giving silence tongues to cry against us!
For though we shut our ears and will not hark,
And blind our eyes from seeing, he is there;
The dust of heavenly battle dims his hair,
The large gods close about him, he is down;
Now thrice three times about the shining town
The thunder-wingèd chariot drags his corse;

And now they bind him to the wingèd horse
With chains of burning light; the portent rears
away
O'er prairies of insufferable day!

Chorus of Men.

'Twixt Berenice's tangled hair
And that blue region of the morning where
The bright wind-shaken Lyre
Sheds down the dawn its spilth of silver fire,
We saw him stoop and run upon the air,
Shielding from region gusts the stolen flame;
But from a steep cloud warping up the west
A curse of lightning came.
With tort-flung neck and clutchèd breast
He fell, a ruined star;
And now the char
Had quenched itself with hissing, in the sea,
But lo, again his soul flamed gloriously!
The eagle tempest, gyring from its place,
Seized him, and whirled,
And hung him on the plunging prow of the world,
To shed the anguish of his face
Upon the reefs and shoals of space,
To lighten with the splendor of his pain

Earth's pathway through the main,
Though death was all her freightage, and the
breath
That swelled her sails was death.

A MAN'S VOICE.

He will not come. I heard an old bard once
Sing of him, saying Titan Iapetos
Fathered him not; his mother Clymene,
Wandering in the morning of the world,
Suffered human embraces. 'T will be so,
For he is human-minded, and too slight
To wrest from God's hand the withholden fire.

SECOND VOICE.

Hearken! One sings upon the upper slopes.

THIRD VOICE.

'T is she, the other gift in mockery sent,
Pandora.

FOURTH VOICE.

Haunting, cruel to the heart.
She opens sunny doors, which ere we look
Are closed foreverlasting, and their place
Not to be guessed.

FIFTH VOICE.

This was another thing
Prometheus did. Whom the gods sent in wrath
To make us know how wondrous was the life
That inchmeal they took from us, even her
He chose out for his love, and even here
He made his bridals.

SIXTH VOICE.

Some say 't is not so,
But she Pandora is a child he had
Before the sea rose and the night came down,
And others say his sister, whom he fetched
From Hades, where she was with Clymene,
Being childed late, after the Titans fell.

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

Hush, hark, the pouring music! Never yet
The pools below the waterfalls, thy pools,
Thy dark pools, O my heart —!

A YOUNG MAN'S VOICE.

Delirious breast!
She jetteth gladness as a sacred bird,
That o'er the springtime waves, at large of dawn,

Off Delos, to the wakening Cyclades
Declares Apollo.

A GIRL'S VOICE.

Once more, once more, O sisters, ere we die
I will lift up my cry
To Him who loved us though He puts us by.
For yonder singer with the golden mouth
Hath fallen upon us privily as falls
The still spring out of the south
On the shut passes and locked mountain walls,
And suddenly from out my frozen heart
Dark buds of sorrow start,
Freshets of thought through my faint being roll,
And dim remembrance gropes and travails in my
soul.

I will cry on Him piercingly
By reason of my girlhood how it ailed,
Then when I seemed
Unto myself a thing myself had dreamed,
And for whose sake the visionary Spring
High in the chilly meadows where she stood
With lips of passionate listening
In the sea-wind above the moaning wood,

Scattered her discrowned hair, and bowed herself,
and wailed.
And then, a little after, came a day
That loosed my bands of ailing all away;
For somewhere in the wilds a spirit spoke,
The ghostly earth went past me like a stream,
And swooning suddenly aloft I woke
To an intenser dream.
Would mine were that same spirit's tongue to tell
The joy that then befell, —
Rather befell not, but refrained,
Lurked and withdrew,
And was an inner freshness in the dew,
A look inscrutable the stars put on,
A fount of secret color in the dawn,
After day-fall a daylight that remained
Brighter than what was gone.
O sisters, kiss the numbing death away
From off my heavy lips, and let me say
How fair my summoned spirit blossomed in its clay,
When the girls sang of me that I was his
Whose voice I heard treading the wilderness;
And I had followed him as the homing dove
That furtive way he went,
Till now he had brought me up into his tent,

Where flutes made mention of love, and wild
throats said
With wine and honey of love were his tables spread,
Also the banner over us was love!
Pause.

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

Look, Pandora comes!
See, there above the cliff she glimmers down,
And darker shapes come with her.

A MAN'S VOICE.

The big seed
Deukalion and Pyrrha sowed in hope
To reap in terror; the scarce-featured sons
Of stone, and daughters of the sullen glebe.

DEUKALION.

Waking.
Pyrrha! Where art thou?

PYRRHA.

'T is my face thou feelest,
Thy groping hands are even on me, father.

DEUKALION.

Who are these? How is 't with us? O wherefore
Gaze ye all thus aloft?

PYRRHA.

Pandora comes.

DEUKALION.

I see naught. Since a little while mine eyes
And brain are faded. Help mine eyes to see.

PYRRHA.

She pauses on the margin of the cliff.
About her are the shapes of them who rose
Behind us, when we sowed the heavy seed.
Her either hand is on a kneeling head,
Female and male; her forehead more than theirs
Is lifted up in yearning, and her face
Is like the lyrist's when at first he waits
And drifts his heart up through the cloudy strings.

A MAN'S VOICE.

Take heed there to the lad, where he hath risen
His height upon the altar! And the maid
Is risen. Look to them!

PYRRHA.

Children! Æolus!
What is 't with you? What search ye in the heavens?

O, to what high thing do your spirits strain
And your hands tremble up?

ÆOLUS AND ALCYONE.

Looking and pointing upward.

The stars! The stars!

Pause.

DEUKALION.

Why hath so deep a hush fallen on the night?
I heard a whispering cry. What whisper they?

PYRRHA.

Æolus pointed — whispering of the stars.

DEUKALION.

Æolus — stars. Pyrrha!

PYRRHA.

With thee!

DEUKALION.

Spakest thou
Of stars?

PYRRHA.

Ay, so he whispered!

DEUKALION.

Thou — and thou?

PYRRHA.

Nothing, nothing. My soul was as a lake
Spread out in utter darkness; to its depth
There pierced a silvery trembling —

DEUKALION.

Look again.
Wife, cease to pray! Look out again!

PYRRHA.

The dark
Gathers and flees, and the wide roof of night
Leans in as it would break; the mountainous gloom
Unmoors, and streameth on us like a sea.
O Earth, lift up thy gates! It is the stars!
It is the stars! It is the ancient stars!
It is the young and everlasting stars!

PANDORA.

Sings.

Because one creature of his breath
Sang loud into the face of death,
Because one child of his despair

Could strangely hope and wildly dare,
The Spirit comes to the Bride again,
And breathes at her door the name of the child;
"This is the son that ye bore me! When
Shall we kiss, and be reconciled?"

Furtive, dumb, in the tardy stone,
With gropings sweet in the patient sod,
In the roots of the pine, in the crumbled cone,
With cries of haste in the willow-rod, —
By pools where the hyla swells his throat
And the partridge drums to his crouching mate,
Where the moorland stag and the mountain goat
Strictly seek to the ones that wait, —
In seas aswing on the coral bar,
In feasting depths of the evening star,
In the dust where the mourner bows his head,
In the blood of the living, the bones of the dead, —
Wounded with love in breast and side,
The Spirit goes in to the Bride!

PYRRHA.

The veil that hid the holy sky is rent;
The vapors ravel down; and a bright wind
Blows, that the planets and the shoalèd worlds
Stoop from their dance, and wheel and shout again,

Scattering influence as a mænad shakes
Pine sparks and moon-dew from her whirling hair.
And hark, below, the many-voicèd earth,
The chanting of the old religious trees,
Rustle of far-off waters, woven sounds
Of small and multitudinous lives awake,
Peopling the grasses and the pools with joy,
Uttering their meaning to the mystic night!

A MAN'S VOICE.

Within my soul there is a rushing down
Like darkness, and my being, as a heaven,
Soareth apparent, as a heaven with stars.
A heaven hung with stars my spirit is,
And all among them walks a wind of will,
Uttering life, and purpose, and desire!

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

O for the dreaming herbs, the whispering trees,
And rustling, far-off waters of my heart!
O for the mystic night risen within me!
The multitudinous life, the busy sounds
Of woven love, the hushed and pouring love,
The pouring love and stillness of the night!

DEUKALION.

Wife, wife, what falleth since?

PYRRHA.

A stir of joy
Troubles the fields of air 'twixt star and star.
Across the quivering acres, by and large,
An unimaginable Reaper goes,
And where he walks the heavens are seldom-sown;
Till o'er wan earth the spreaded heavens are bare,
Save for one mighty star that gathers light
And stands like a flushed singer telling glory.
Now he, now even he has no dominion,
For he has looked behind him to the mountains,
O, he has looked up to the lovely mountains
Of the unimagined morning, and has hearkened
The pouring of the chill, eternal urns!
Over the solemn world grey habitation
Wonders at habitation. Room by room,
The heavens tremble and put on delight,
Ignorant one to another why it is
The festal wish compels them. They are brightened
Under the feet of many breathless spirits,

Who, lifting up their hands by the springs of
ocean,
Cried "Pæan!" and "O, Hymen!" As a stream
Silvereth in a wind-start, heaven is brightened
Under the speed and striving of those spirits, —
Who now, even now dissolve, and leave behind
them
Only their gladness and their speed; for now
Through all its height and frame of living light,
Through all its clear creation, breathing depths
And fleeing distances, the sacred sky
Pulses and is astonished like a heart;
It looketh inward and bethinks itself,
Outward, and putteth all its question by,
To shine and soar and sing and be at one! —
Nearhand the slopes drink light, and far about
Among the mountain places, headlands, cliffs,
Lone peaks, and brotherhoods of battlement
Shout, having apprehended. — Paler grow
The gulfs of shadowy air that brim the vales;
As ocean bateth in her thousand firths,
The grey and silver air draws down the land.
The little trees that climb among the rocks
As high as they can live, pierce with their spires
The shoaling mist, swim softly into light,

And stand apparent, shapely, every one
A dream of divine life, a miracle.
Chasms are cloven in the violet
And amethystine waters of the air;
Forests and winding rivers of the plain
Are given and withdrawn; a moment since
I saw, I thought I saw a strength of hill
Uplifted far below us, built upon
With what was once a lordly place of souls,
A carved and marble place of puissant souls,
Builded to such strong music that the sea
Had hardly heaved one lintel from its post,
Or marred one face of all the sculptured men,
Or shaken from his seat one musing god. —
Again the air is cloven; I have seen
Fane-crownèd promontories, curving sweeps
Of silver shore, islands, and straits, and bays;
And bright beyond, the myriad ocean stream.
And O, beyond — beyond! — O shelter me!
Bow down! Cover your eyes!

CONFUSED VOICES.

Terrible wings! —
Light awfuller than darkness or the sea! —
O spirit of sharp flame amid the burning!

A BOY'S VOICE.

My hands are on my eyelids, and my knees
Shelter my face. O mother, lay thy breast
About me, and shut out the killing light,
Before my eyeballs and my brain be dead!

DEUKALION.

On his knees, with outstretched hands.

Of late mine eyes were quenched, and now I see.

PYRRHA.

Thine eyelids are not open, but thy face
Searcheth into the radiance. Father, cease!
Look not upon it with thy soul. Thy face
Is terrible with beauty in the light.
I cannot look upon thy seeing face.
Take not the mortal glory on thy face!
Bow down — O let me shield thy sightless eyes!

DEUKALION.

Burning is laid unto the roots of the world;
The deep spouts conflagration from her springs;
And fire feeds on the air that feeds the stars.
Out of the sea has burst, from rended deeps
Of the unthought-on rearward has leapt out

The appearance of the glory of the sun,
Filling the one side of the roaring world
With creatures and with branch-work of pale fire;
And through the woods of fire the beasts of fire,
The birds and serpents and the naked souls
Flee, that their fleeing startles the slow dead
Through all their patient kingdoms, and the
gods
In their faint spheres are flown and passionate.

A MAN'S VOICE.

My soul is among lions. God, my God,
Thou see'st my quivering spirit what it is!
O lay not life upon it! We not knew
The thing we asked for. We had all forgot
How cruel was thy splendor in the house
Of sense, how awful in the house of thought,
How far unbearable in the wild house
That thou hast cast and builded for the heart!

LYKOPHON.

Deukalion, speak again!

PYRRHA.

If yet thy flesh
Endure to look upon it, speak again.

DEUKALION.

His soul is strong and will deliver him!
The feature of his anguish and his joy
Makes dim the light adjacent, and his soul
Is bright to overcome. He treads the glory
Over against the roaring, hitherward.
Seeing the taper of small excellent light
He lifteth in his hand, the night rolls on
Before him, and day follows after him.
The hours, the months, the seasons, and the times
Acknowledge him; the waste calls to the sown;
The islands and hoar places of the sea
Sing, as the chief of them that are taught praises.
About his torch shineth a dust of souls,
Daughters and sons, who fly into the light
With trembling, and emerge with prophecy;
And round about goeth a wind of tongues,
A wind as of the travailing of the nations;
Vast sorrow, and the cry of desperate lives
To God, and God to them crying or answering.—
Child! Æolus! My child. Where is my child?

PYRRHA.

I cannot see; the dazzle of his coming
Makes blind the place. Here, father, in thy knees!

Feel, 't is the darling head! Wild comer, when?
Hasten, have pity, we are nothing strong!
Father, how is 't with thee? Why bow'st thou
down?
Thy hand is cold, thy lips are very cold. —
O gone, O gone, even at the entering-in!

A VOICE.

Who are these coming down, that they are mighty
To walk with foreheads forward to the light,
Singing the mortal radiance to its face?

A VOICE.

It is Pandora and the unborn men,
Deukalion's seed. She doth it of her power,
They of their weakness.

PANDORA.

Sings, invisible in the light.

Ye who from the stone and clay
Unto godhood grope your way,
Hastening up the morning see
Yonder One in trinity!

THE EARTH WOMEN.

Save us, flaming Three!

PANDORA.

Dionysus hath the wine,
Eros hath the rose divine,
Lord Apollo hath the lyre:
Three and one is the soul's desire.

THE STONE MEN.

Save us, sons of fire!

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

Listen, they have passed.
They go with singing forward down the light.

PROMETHEUS.

Below, invisible.
Thou gavest me the vessel; it is filled.

PANDORA.

I am the vessel, and with thee 't is filled.
Pause.

LYKOPHON.

Whispers.
Pyrrha!

PYRRHA.

Who whispers me?

LYKOPHON.

Is he not come?
Is he not busied by the altar there?

PYRRHA.

Nay — Lo, the terrible taper! It is he!
I see him not; my spirit seeth him;
My heart acheth upon him busied there.
— Deukalion, O Deukalion!

PROMETHEUS.

From the altar.

Pyrrha! Pyrrha!

PYRRHA.

Prometheus, saviour!

PROMETHEUS.

Lykophon!

LYKOPHON.

Lo, me!

PROMETHEUS.

Bring me your children hither.

PYRRHA AND LYKOPHON.

Groping forward with Æolus and Alcyone.

Here are they!

PROMETHEUS.

Unto this twain, man-child and woman-child,
I give the passion of this element;
This seed of longing, substance of this love;
This power, this purity, this annihilation.
Let their hands light the altar of the world.
'T is yours forever. I have brought it home!

The radiant mist fades; it is clear day, flooded with morning sunlight. The children apply the burning reed to the fuel, and fire flames high upon the altar. Pandora's voice is heard faintly, far below.

PANDORA.

Too far, too far, though hidden in thine arms;
Too darkly far, though lips on lips are laid!
Love, love, I am afraid;
I know not where to find thee in these storms
That dashed thy changèd breast my breast upon,
Here in the estranging dawn.
Unsteadfast! who didst call and hast not stayed.
Tryst-breaker! I have heard
Thy voice in the green wood, and not deferred: —
O fold me closer, fugitive one, and say where thou art gone!

Nay, speak not, strive not, sorrow not at all!
O, dim and gradual! —
Belovèd, my belovèd, shall it be?
Keep me, keep me with thy kiss,
Save me with thy deep embrace;
For down the gulfs of spirit space,
The slow, the implacable winds, now unescapably
Wheel us downward to our bliss,
Whelm us, darken us — O lethal winds! — down to
our destined place.
Swimming faint, beneath, afar —
O lover, let there be
No haste, nor clamor of thy heart to see!
But I have seen, and I whisper thee
How the rivers of peace apparent are,
And the city of bridal peace
Waits, and wavers, and hardly is,
Fades, and is folded away from sight;
And now like a lily it openeth wistfully,
Whispering through its courts of light
"How long shall we be denied?
How long must the eastern gate stand wide,
Ere these who are called shalt enter in, and the bride-
groom be with the bride?"

ACT III

An open rocky place higher in the mountains; in the rock-wall at one side is a rough-hewn open tomb; in the rear the stranded ark of Deukalion, caught amid great rocks, is outlined against snow-peaks and against a vast sunset cloud, full of shifting light. The funeral train of Deukalion winds up the steep path from below. Lykophon and a company of grown men carry the bier, beside which walk Pyrrha and Æolus.

CHORUS OF OLD MEN.

In one same breath
Uttering life and death,
Whatso his mouth seems darkly to ordain
The darkling signal of his hand makes vain,
And like a heart confused He sayeth and gainsaith.
With himself He wrestles thus
Or gives this wrestling unto us.
Whichever, it is well.
O children, we are risen out of hell,
And it is pleasant evening! Daughters, sing!

Upon his way let soft and golden mirth
Be spoken round the king,
And unto heaven be told the sweetness of the earth.

CHORUS OF GIRLS.

How shall the thought of our hearts be said,
Here, where this averted head
Lonely walks by the lonely dead?
'T were better others sang,
Not we, not we!
For when the mighty morning sprang
Terrible in gladness from the sea,
When, entering the high places of the air,
Noontide unbelievably
Possessed them, and lifted up his trophy there, —
Yea, all the noon and all the afternoon,
We could have put our secret by, we could have spoken
Well before thee, O mourner, O heart broken!
But now, but now — Mother, mother,
We have seen one coming with thee up the steep;
His mild great wing we saw him keep
Over thee like a sheltering arm,
And the shadow of one pinion fell across

To shield the bosom of thy lord from harm;
We have seen him, the dark peace-giver, Thanatos; —
But O, we have seen also another,
Winged like him, and dazzling dim,
He came up out of the sun, yet he goeth not down therewith;
For, ever warmer, closer, as the evening falleth pale,
His arm is over our necks, and his breath
Searches whispering under our hair; and his burning whisper saith
A thing that maketh the heart to cease and the limbs to fail,
And the hands to grope for they know not what;
We would not find what he whispers of, and we die if we find it not!

Chorus of Young Women.

Ere our mothers gave us birth,
Or in the morning of the earth
The high gods walked with the daughters and found them fair,
Ere ever the hills were piled or the seas were spread,

His arm was over our necks, my sisters, his breath was under our hair!
Their spirits withered and died who then
Found not the thing that his whisper said,
But we are the living, the chosen of life, who found it and found it again.
Where, walking secret in the flame,
Unbearably the Titan came,
Eros, Eros, yet we knew thee,
Yet we saw and cried unto thee!
Where thy face amid exceeding day more excellently shone
There our still hearts laughed upon thee, thou divine despaired-of one!
Though o'er and o'er our eyes and ears the heavy hair was wound,
Yet we saw thee, yet we heard thy pinions beat!
Though our fore-arms hid our faces and our brows were on the ground,
Yet, O Eros, we declare
That with flutes and timbrels meet,
Whirling garments, drunken feet,
With tears and throes our souls arose and danced before thee there!

They place the body in the hewn vault of the rock.

PYRRHA.

Go down now. I and Æolus will watch
Till dawn, when ye will come to shut the tomb
And sing him to his peace.

LYKOPHON.

Some few with thee
Will hold the watch, for safety.

PYRRHA.

None. Alone.

The others go down the path, leaving Pyrrha and Æolus seated by the tomb ; a girl lingers behind, and when the last figure has disappeared, throws herself at Pyrrha's feet.

RHODOPE.

See, it is Rhodope, thy handmaiden!
Behold, thou knowest. He loved her. She would stay.

PYRRHA.

Touching her head.

Thy heart shall take no fear. O, stay with us!

The voices of the young men are heard, descending.

CHORUS OF YOUNG MEN.

When, to the king's unveilèd eyes
The rended deeps and the rended skies

Seemed as a burning wood, —
Iacchos! Iacchos!
When flame took hold of the place of the dead,
And burning seized on the throne of God,
And birds and beasts and the souls of men
As a wind of burning fled, —
Iacchos!
Yea, in the blinding radiance when
The Bringer of Light by the altar stood,
Iacchos! Iacchos! Evoë!
We saw thee, we knew thee, we cried upon thee!
We had lost thee and had thee again!
Plucker of the tragic fruit,
Eater of the frantic root,
Shaker of the cones of raving, sounder of the panic flute
Over man and brute,
Iacchos!
Hunter in the burning wood,
Planter of the mystic vine,
From the spirit and the blood
Crusher of the awful wine,
Iacchos! Evoë! Iacchos!

The voice dies away in the distance. Silence.

ÆOLUS.

Whispers to Rhodope.

See'st thou? The cloud!

Touching Pyrrha.

Mother, what means the cloud?

PYRRHA.

Raising her head.

How, child?

ÆOLUS.

The cloud. See how it lives within!

PYRRHA.

'T will rain; he brought us back the blessèd rain,
And storm, and natural darkness, with the light.

Bows her head again.

As also to our hearts the shutting-in
Of rain and natural darkness.

RHODOPE.

Looking up from Pyrrha's knees.

All the hours
Since long ago at dawn, the livelong hours
Of glory, since he brought the morning back,
The cloud has piled itself, and wondrous lights
Have been thus restless in it.

ÆOLUS.

Where is he?

PYRRHA.

I know not, child. It may be that he sleeps,
Being weary; or he wanders with his love
To gaze upon the gladness of the world.

RHODOPE.

No one has seen him since he fetched the light.
They say of him — I heard the old men say —

PYRRHA.

The sun goes down: we will be silent now.

Silence. Æolus and Rhodope, leaning together, fall asleep. Pyrrha kneels by the tomb, with hands stretched aloft upon the king's breast.

PYRRHA.

Speaks low.

Thou whom my glad heart once deliberately
Chose, and this morning suddenly with tears
Chose, and was chosen, and was made thine at last
In the destroying light — Deukalion, lord,
The day is past, the evening cometh on.
Once more to thy full-wishing lips I hold

The chalice of my heart up, husband! husband!
For night begins to pour her voices out,
And thou art stayed for on the voiceless hills.

She lifts her head and listens. In the distance Pandora's voice is heard, sharp and agonized.

PYRRHA.

For thee too, then! Even also for thee
He smote the rock; thy spirit thirsted too
Afar there in the desert of thy joy,
And came and drank against the morning ray
Waters of trembling. By the pools in haste
Thy soul stooped, plucking herb and flower of pain
That groweth newly there, by the new stream!

RHODOPE.

Runs with Æolus, and crouches beside Pyrrha.

Pyrrha! Mother Pyrrha! Look, alas,
Lo, how it comes upon us! The bird! The bird!

PYRRHA.

What — where? How suddenly has darkness fallen,
And now as suddenly 't is light again!
How terribly the lion thunder roared

Leaping along the mountains to the sea!
— What saw ye? What went by us in the wind?

RHODOPE.

Look where the giant wings rock down the slope!

PYRRHA.

Gazing below.
God's bird of wrath! Swift is thy wrath, O God,
Strong is thy jealousy!

RHODOPE.

Awhile I slept;
Then as I looked and wondered at the cloud,
The restless lights flushed angry, and all the west
Shone stormy bright with ridges of blown fire.
The cloud flamed like a peak of the fiery isles,
Where in the western seas Hephæstos toils.
Then from yon cloven valley in the midst
Came forth the wings and shadow of the bird,
And grew towards us vaster than storm, more swift
Than I could cry upon him, and passed down.
Once o'er the plain and o'er the ocean straits,
And twice o'er the old olives by the stream
Where the folk rest to-night, his shadow wheeled,

And now he towers straight upward like a smoke,
High, high, into the evening.

Pandora's cry is heard again; she appears in the rocks above the tomb, gazing upward. After a moment she comes down and kneels beside Pyrrha, hiding her face against the rocks. Pause.

PYRRHA.

In a low voice, gazing at the cloud.

Deemest thou
That he will yield himself unmurmuring up,
Or will he make wild war along the peaks?

Prometheus enters swiftly from below, and raises Pandora. They stand clasped in each other's arms beside Pyrrha, who, still kneeling, draws herself up to gaze into the king's face, then clasps Æolus with one arm and with the other the knees of Prometheus.

PYRRHA.

Leave us not yet, before another dawn
Comes, bringing surety! For the giant dark,
Seeing thee absent, may arise again,
And Python lift unnameably his head
In hell, hearing the gods hiss him awake.

PROMETHEUS.

Be comforted; it is established sure.
Light shall arise from light, day follow day,

Season meet season, with all lovely signs
And portents of the year. These shall not fail;
From their appointed dance no star shall swerve,
Nor mar one accent of one whirling strophe
Of that unfathomed chorus that they sing
Within the porch and laughing house of Life,
Which Time and Space and Change, bright caryatids,
Do meanwhile pillar up. These shall not fail;
But O, these were the least I brought you home!
The sun whose rising and whose going down
Are joy and grief and wonder in the heart;
The moon whose tides are passion, thought, and will;
The signs and portents of the spirit year, —
For these, if you would keep them, you must strive
Morning and night against the jealous gods
With anger, and with laughter, and with love;
And no man hath them till he brings them down
With love, and rage, and laughter from the heavens, —
Himself the heavens, himself the scornful gods,
The sun, the sun-thief, and the flaming reed
That kindles new the beauty of the world.
He draws Æolus and Rhodope to him.

For you the moon stilly imagineth
Her loiterings and her soft vicissitudes;
For you the Pleiades are seven, and one
Wanders invisible because of you;
For you the snake is burnished in the spring,
The flower has plots touching its marriage time,
The queen-bee from her wassailed lords soars high
And high and high into the nuptial blue,
Till only one heroic lover now
Flies with her, and her royal wish is prone
To the elected one, whose dizzy heart
Presageth him of ecstasy and death.
For you the sea has rivers in the midst,
And fathomless abysses where it breeds
Fantastic life; and each its tiniest drop
Flung from the fisher's oar-blade in the sun
Has rivers, abysses, and fantastic life.
For your sakes it was spoken of the soul
That it shall be a sea whereon the moon
Has might, and the four winds shall walk upon it, —
Also it has great rivers in the midst,
Uncharted islands that no sailor sees,
And fathomless abysses where it breeds
Mysterious life; yea, each its tiniest drop

Flung from the fisher's oar-blade in the sun
Has rivers, tempests, and eternal tides,
Untouched-at isles, horizons never hailed,
And fathomless abysses where it breeds
Incredible life, without astonishment.
He bends over Deukalion.
O death, majestic mood! Transfigured brow
And eyes heavy with vision, since the time
They saw creation sitting like a sphinx,
Woman and lion, riddling of herself
At twilight, in the place of parted souls —
He pauses, looks at the lighted cloud, and below at the darkening earth, where a mist is beginning to rise.
As far as being goes out past the stars
Into unthinkable distance, and as far
As being inward goes unthinkably,
Traveling the atom to its fleeing core,
Through world in world, heaven beneath wheeling heaven,
Firmament under firmament, without end, —
To-day there is rejoicing, and the folk,
Though ignorant, call us blessèd in their hearts.
Yea, He who is the Life of all this life,
Death of this death and Riser from this death,
Calleth us blessèd in his heart of hearts;

And once again, in the dim end of things,
When the sun sickens, and the heaven of heavens
Flames as a frosty leaf unto the fall,
In swoon and anguish shall his stormèd heart
Cry unto us; his cry is ringing there
In the sun's core! I heard it when I stood
Where all things past and present and to come
Ray out in fiery patterns, fading, changing,
Forevermore unfaded and unchanged.

ÆOLUS.

Behold, alas, mother, look up!
O haste, let us be hidden in the rocks!

PYRRHA.

The wings that were a little cloud in heaven
Shed doom over the third part of the north;
And now he slants enormous down the west
Toward his throne and eyrie in the cloud.

In the background, about the ark of Deukalion, the figures of the Stone Men and Earth Women emerge, and stand darkly outlined against the sunset cloud. Prometheus speaks low to Pandora, who falls at his feet.

PANDORA.

I would be there with thee, love. O, not here!

PROMETHEUS.

Stooping over her.

There where I go thou art; there, even now
Thou cried'st me to thee, and I come, I come.

He lays her in Pyrrha's arms, and disappears in the rocks; he emerges on a higher level behind, and turns westward.

Pausing beside the ark.

O rude and dazèd spirits! Ye shall grope
And wonder toward a knowledge and a grace
That now we dream not of; then loneliness
Shall flee away, and enmity no more
Be spectral in the houses and the streets
Where walk your primal hearts in the large light
That floods the after-earth.

He raises his arms over them.

Out of these stones
I build my rumoring city, basèd deep
On elemental silence; in this soil
I plant my cool vine and my shady tree,
Whose roots shall feed upon the central fire!

He crosses a rocky stretch leading to the western heights over which the cloud rests, and disappears in a mist-filled pass. Æolus and Rhodope creep closer to Pyrrha and Pandora, sheltering themselves from the chill of the rising mist, which slowly covers the scene. There is a long silence, broken by faint peals of thunder.

ÆOLUS.

Whispers.

Mother, the mist was grey and thick to breathe
But now; and now 't is thin, and flushes red
As if all round the forests were aflame.

RHODOPE.

Whispers.

Hush! See'st thou not it is the mighty cloud,
That flames more fiery when the thunder speaks.
Heavy thunder; Pandora starts wildly up.

PYRRHA.

Drawing her down.

Thou spirit bird, that sangest all night long
And mad'st sweet utterance from the secret shade
Where his wild heart spread coolness in the sun,
For thee to flit and sing, — O look not out!
Still hide thee in my breast!
Pandora sinks back. Pyrrha whispers to Rhodope.
Rise thou, and look!

RHODOPE.

Rises and speaks in a low voice.

Over against the region where he went
Thunder has torn the curtain of the mist,
And out of moving darkness soars the cloud

Like as a shadowed ruby, but above
Like as an opal and a sardine stone
Sun-touched to the panting heart; and in the midst
Are shapes throned on the moving of the lights,
Who ride the wrathful lights, and are the lights.
Up through the driving fringes of the mist
Battle a living splendor and a gloom.
O, while the shapes gather and wait at gaze,
That pharos of our peril in the straits,
That treader of the cups of gladness out
In the sun's vineyard for us — Mother! Mother!
Look hither, look at last, for it is time.
Up through the crud and substance of the cloud
Prometheus wrestles with the bird of God!
Pyrrha rises, lifting Pandora.

ÆOLUS.

Look how the sudden wind has quenched the cloud,
And them that were therein; and how its blowing
Shoulders the mist away from the keen stars
That rushed out at the fading of the lights!
Look you, the cloud comes on us in the wind!
It tramples down the mountains, and above

Reaches abroad in darkness, blotting out
Place upon place of stars.

RHODOPE.

The smoky air
Climbs up and eddies round us and falls down,
Rolling and spreading wider than the world!

As the cloud advances, Pandora goes toward it with outstretched hands, and pauses beside the prow of the ark, among the Stone Men and Earth Women, while deeper and deeper darkness drifts over the scene. The voices of Pyrrha and Pandora are heard as from the midst of the cloud.

PYRRHA.

Vast sorrow, and the voice of broken souls;
A cry as of all kinds and generations,
Times, places, and tongues; or as a mother
Heareth her unborn child crying for birth.

PANDORA.

Sings.

A thousand æons, nailed in pain
On the blown world's plunging prow,
That seeks across the eternal main, —
Down whatever storms we drift,
What disastrous headlands lift,

Festal lips, triumphant brow,
Light us with thy joy, as now!

PYRRHA.

A sound of calling and of answering;
Answer or watch-cry of all desperate lives
To God, and God to them calling or answering.

The Stone Men and Earth Women sing, their voices growing fainter as they descend the valley behind.

THE STONE MEN AND EARTH WOMEN.

We have heard the valleys groan
With one voice and manifold;
Stone is crying unto stone,
Mould is whispering unto mould.

THE STONE MEN.

Hear them whisper, hear them call,
"*All for one, and one for all,*
Dig the well and raise the wall."

THE EARTH WOMEN.

"*For the nations to be born,*
Root away the bitter thorn,
Reap and sow the golden corn."

RHODOPE.

To Pyrrha.

Hear'st thou this yet that thou didst whisper of,
Or is all silence now even to thee?

Pyrrha does not answer. Pandora's voice is heard, also from the valley behind, but more distant.

PANDORA.

Sings.

I stood within the heart of God;
It seemed a place that I had known:
(I was blood-sister to the clod,
Blood-brother to the stone.)

I found my love and labor there,
My house, my raiment, meat and wine,
My ancient rage, my old despair, —
Yea, all things that were mine.

RHODOPE.

To Æolus.

Doth not the cloud go by us? Yonder, see,
A star looks dimly through. And there, and there
'T is all awake with stars!

PANDORA.

Sings.

I saw the spring and summer pass,
The trees grow bare, and winter come;
All was the same as once it was
Upon my hills at home.

Then suddenly in my own heart
I felt God walk and gaze about;
He spoke; his words seemed held apart
With gladness and with doubt.

"*Here is my meat and wine,*" *He said,*
"*My love, my toil, my ancient care;*
Here is my cloak, my book, my bed,
And here my old despair.

"*Here are my seasons: winter, spring,*
Summer the same, and autumn spills
The fruits I look for; everything
As on my heavenly hills.

RHODOPE.

How swiftly now,
As if it had a meaning in its haste,
The cloud-bank fades and dwindles in the north!

Starlight and silence. After a time, dawn begins to break in the east. Pyrrha rises and kneels again by the tomb. As the light increases, Æolus and Rhodope climb higher among the rocks and watch for the rising of the sun. Below, the voices of the young men are heard.

CHORUS OF YOUNG MEN.

Ascending.

One large last star, not yet persuaded well,
Expected till the mountains should declare;
But from his hesitant attitude,
From his wild and waiting mood,
Wildly, waitingly there came
Over sea and earth and air
And on our bended hearts there fell
Trembling and expectation of thy name,
Apollo!
Now the East to the West has flung
Sudden hands aloft, and sung
Thy titles, and thy certain coming-on;
Wheeling ever to the right hand, wheeling ever
to the dawn,
The South has danced before the North,
And the text of her talking feet is the news of thy
going forth,
Apollo! Apollo! Apollo!

When radiance hid the Titan's face
And all was blind in the altar place,
Then we knew thee, O we cried upon thee then,
Apollo! Apollo!
Past thee Dionysus swept,
The wings of Eros stirred and slept,
And we knew not the mist of thy song from the mist of the fire,
As out of the core of the light thy lyre laughed and thundered again!

Eros, how sweet
Is the cup of thy drunkenness!
Dionysus, how our feet
Hasten to the burning cup
Thou liftest up!
But O how sweetest and how most burning it is
To drink of the wine of thy lightsome chalices,
Apollo! Apollo! To-day
We say we will follow thee and put all others away.
For thou alone, O thou alone art he
Who settest the prisoned spirit free,
And sometimes leadest the rapt soul on
Where never mortal thought has gone;
Till by the ultimate stream

Of vision and of dream
She stands
With startled eyes and outstretched hands,
Looking where other suns rise over other lands,
And rends the lonely skies with her prophetic scream.

THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

To E. D. S.

THE MASQUE OF JUDGMENT

PRELUDE

The action falls immediately before the Incarnation.

PERSONS OF THE PRELUDE

RAPHAEL
URIEL
THE ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE
A SHEPHERD
A SHEPHERD BOY
A YOUNG MAN (*persona muta*)
A GIRL

SCENE I

A meadow and coppice near the sea; beyond low hills the roofs of a town. Dawn.

RAPHAEL.

Another night like this would change my blood
To human: the soft tumult of the sea
Under the moon, the panting of the stars,

The notes of querulous love from pool and clod,
In earth and air the dreamy under-hum
Of hived hearts swarming, — such another night
Would quite unsphere me from my angelhood!
Thrice have I touched my lute's least human strings
And hushed their throbbing, hearing how they spake
Sheer earthly, they that once so heavenly sang
Above the pure unclouded psalmody.
Sing as thou wilt, then, since thou needs must sing!
For ever song grows dearer as I walk
These evenings of large sunset, these dumb noons
Vastly suspended, these enormous nights
Through which earth heaves her bulk toward the dawn.
With song I shelter me, who else were left
Defenseless amid God's infinitudes,
Bruised by the unshod trample of his hours.
He sings.

The late moon would not stay,
The stars grow far and few;
Into her house of day
Hung with Sidonian blue

Stealeth the earth, as a mænad girl
Steals to her home when the orgies are o'er
That startled the glens and the sleeping shore,
And up from the passionate deeps of night
Into the shallows and straits of light
Softly the forests whirl.
Laugh, earth! For thy feigning-face is wise;
There is naught so clear as thy morning eyes;
And the sun thy lord is an easy lord!
What should they be to him, —
Thine hours of dance in the woodland dim,
The brandished torch and the shouted word,
The flight, the struggle, the honeyed swoon
'Neath the wild, wild lips of the moon?

Beyond the seaward screen of hazel boughs
The waves flash argent 'neath the clambering light;
But wherefore do these wondrous colors run
Out of the place of morning? The young leaves
Are swept and winnowed upward as a flame,
And in their whispering glories swiftly dawns
A shape of lordly wings, each plume distinct
With dyes auroral. Where, 'mid store of light,
Most spiritual silver burns, a face comes through.
My comrade Uriel cometh from the sun!

URIEL.

Appearing.
Why tarriest on thine errand, Raphael?

RAPHAEL.

I do no errand here.

URIEL.

Why camest thou then?

RAPHAEL.

Since earth is dear to me. Sometimes it seems —
Treading the prairie's autumn sibilance,
Or when the tongues of summer lightning speak
In the corners of the cloud — I could forget
My station 'mid the deathless hierarchies,
And change into a clot of anxious clay.

URIEL.

Mock not, sweet brother! thou who knowest well —
Better than I or Michael or the rest —
The throes that shake these clots of passionate clay;
Knowest their lewd harsh blood, their shell of sense
So frail, so piteously contrived for pain.

RAPHAEL.

I dare to say how little jest it was.
Oft, as I leave these sliding shafts of dark,
And homeward climb the immaterial cliffs,
My heart makes question which were worthier state
For a free soul to choose, — angelic calm,
Angelic vision, ebbless, increscent,
Or earth-life with its reachings and recoils,
Its lewd harsh blood so swift to change and flower
At the least touch of love, its shell of sense
So subtly made to minister them delight,
So frail, so piteously contrived for pain.

URIEL.

Brother, thou dost not well to wander here.
If thou wilt roam, choose some less troubled star.
The roaring midst of the insatiate sun
Where God has set my watch, is peace to this!
Of all the bitter drops that dewed His brow
In his old agony, this earth-drop fell
Most bitter salt, and ever since hath been
Fuller of travailing than other worlds.

RAPHAEL.

Thy speech is dark. I understand it not.

URIEL.

Of a dark thing I speak a few dark words.
Put from thy gaze the sweet bloom of these hills
And all this gorgeous dapple of the sea,
And let thy memory stand again with me
On Time's untrodden threshold, that first day
Which searched and stung our immemorial peace
With pangs of vernal influence. Heaven rose
As if from sleep, and, lo, through all the void
Clambered and curled creation like a vine,
Hanging the dark with clusters of young bloom.
Then from the viewless ever-folded heart
Of the mystic Rose, stole breath and pulse of change,
Delicious pantings such as seize the breast
Of lovers when the love-tide nears its flood,
Yet touched with endless potency of pain,
As lips of mothers when their anguish ebbs
And leaves the waifling life. Then first the Dove
Began to mourn above the mercy-seat,
And the dear sister spirits of the Lamps
Bent all their shimmering wings one way to screen
Their wicks from the wind-flaw. Large with question turned

Angelic eyes to archangelic eyes,
Archangels laid changed lips to the ears of Thrones,
Thrones gazed at Dominations, Powers made sign
To Principalities; but not one dared,
Voicing the fear that filled him, to cry, "Lord,
What hast Thou brought upon Thy kingdom, Thou
Ancient of Days!" Their silence was right well.

RAPHAEL.

All this the meditative spirits oft
Have pondered. But thy meaning still is dark.

URIEL.

Ourselves who questioned why the world was made
Were born of the same questionable seed,
And we who feared were the first cause of fear.
Of a dark thing I speak a few dark words.
Of old the mind of God, coiled on itself
In contemplation single and eterne,
Felt suddenly a stealing wistfulness
Sully the essence of his old content
With pangs of dim division. Long He strove
Against his bosom's deep necessity,

Then, groping for surcease, put forth the orbs
Of Paradise, with all their imagery,
And the ordered hierarchies where we stand;
Some sharing more in his essential calm,
Some, rebel spirits, banished now or quelled,
The ill-starred sons of his disquietude, —
Disquietude not quenched when fell the pride
Of Lucifer, long bastioned in the North.
Demand of joy, hardly to be gainsaid,
And vast necessity of grief, still worked
Compulsive in his breast: our essence calm,
Those lucid orbs accordant, could not bring
Nepenthe long. His hand He still withheld
Ages of ages, fearing the event,
Till, bathed in brighter urge and wistfulness
He put forth suddenly this vine of Time
And hung the hollow dark with passionate change.

RAPHAEL.

I think for me Heaven seemed not Heaven till then,
When from our seats of peace we could behold
The strife of ripening suns and withering moons,
Marching of ice-floes, and the nameless wars
Of monster races laboring to be man;
When we could hear the wrestle of hoarse sound

Hurl gust on gust obscurely toward the time
Of disinvolvèd music: till at last,
Standing erect amid the giant fern —

URIEL.

At last! At last! O shaken Breast, nowhere
Couldst thou find quiet save in putting forth
This last imagination? Could no form
Of being stanch thee in thy groping thought
Save this of Man? Puny and terrible;
Apt to imagine powers beyond himself
In wind and lightning; cunning to evoke
From mould and flint-stone the surprising fire,
And carve the heavy hills to spiritual shapes
Of town and temple; nursing in his veins
More restlessness than called him from the void,
Perfidies, hungers, dreams, idolatries,
Pain, laughter, wonder, anger, sex, and song!

RAPHAEL.

God had one other thought, more sweet, more dire;
Thy latest words remind thee.
Behind the trees a girl's voice sings.

O daughters of Jerusalem!
What said ye unto her

Who took her love by the garment's hem,
Where the tanned grape-gatherers were?
Did any go down and see
If she led him into her house?
Or was it aloft where the wild harts flee,
Was it high in the hills, 'neath the cedar-tree,
That she kissed him and called him spouse?

A young man and a girl come over the hill from the town.

URIEL.

Unto man
Woman was due. To hearts of fire more fire,
To pride of strength a still subduing strength.

As they pass through the coppice, the girl sings.

O keepers of the city walls!
Have ye taken her veil away,
Whose hasting feet and low love-calls
Ye heard at the drop of day?
Have ye taken her ankle-rings,
Who is fair, who hath eyes like a dove?
Must she seek her lover, her king of kings,
Naked, stripped of her costly things?
Must she have no garment but love?

SCENE II

A mountain glade and forest. Midnight.

SHEPHERD.

Here stand, if thou wilt see, by this great bole.
This way they passed, and hither should return.
But pray thee, gentle god, when they draw near
Abate the splendor of thy face, fold close
Thine eyed and irised plumage. God thou art,
But thou must needs be mighty to escape
The hill girls when they rage! From these old boughs
The climbing moon will soon pour deeper shade
To screen thee more.

RAPHAEL.

How looked they when they passed?

SHEPHERD BOY.

Coney, how passed the hailstorm o'er, quotha!
Patter! patter! 't was sung beneath i' the dark.
I lost a birch cup full of whortleberries
Scrambling to cover when I heard their songs.

But when they burst across the glade, I peeped,
And saw their breasts gleam through their angry hair.
Evoë! they had snared the village lad
They hanker for so long. I hear them talk,
Dawdling on well-curbs with their water-skins
Or picking the May-apples.

SHEPHERD.

'T is the lad
Who sat mute at the merry threshing-stead,
Turned from their orgies in the sacred wood
With large bright eyes unamorous, and sang
In lonesome places piercing lonesome songs
Of other lives and other gods than theirs —
Perchance of thee and thy bright-wingèd mates,
If mates be thine, for god thou surely art.

SHEPHERD BOY.

To-night they have him limed! Brow of the hawk,
Throat of the hermit-thrush, and ring-dove eyes!

SHEPHERD.

He came across the moon-drench dragged by three
Whose bodies shone like the peeled willow wand;
The little snakes they knot into their hair

Lipping his neck, where oozed the red of grapes
From his crushed garland; his hands flung aloft
To the symbol of their fierce licentious god.
His eyes were large and fixed, his lips apart,
As I have seen him in the lonesome woods,
But madder than the maddest bacchant there!

RAPHAEL.

Who cometh yonder?

SHEPHERD.

Where?

RAPHAEL.

Across the glade.

SHEPHERD.

I see nought.

RAPHAEL.

There, behind the trailing mist.
The moonlight gathers to a ghostly shape,
Unearthly silver, throbbing like a heart!
It seems a beast and rider.
The shepherds make off.
Ah, I know
That icy influence, and the voice I know,
First heard in Heaven when time began to be,—

A voice above our voices, and a hush
Beneath our hush, freezing the heart with fear,
With fear the heart even of spirit-kind. . . .

THE ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

Sings.

The scourge of the wrath of God
We swing and we stay:
(Rest, my steed, rest!)
On the green of the hill we have trod,
And the green is grey.
Ours is his scourging rod.

Yea, thy hoofs long to be fleet
On the armied hills;
(Yet rest, my steed, rest!)
Scent of the arrowy sleet
Broadens thy nostrils;
The mown field smelleth sweet.

God giveth his loins' increase
Into our hand;
(Rest, my steed, rest!)
We shall establish his peace
By sea and by land.
Soon shall their troubling cease!

RAPHAEL.

What makes thine errand here?

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

Still as of old.

RAPHAEL.

I think thou art way-wandered. Here is life.

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

My horse's feet err not; they are way-wise.

RAPHAEL.

Stand by me in the shade of these old boughs,
And let no anger fan thy wings alight
Or flake the nostrils of thy horse with fire
When the young bacchants halloo down the steep.

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

Thou feedest thy giddy and half-human mind
Still on these little spectacles of change,
Forgetting Heaven's great woes!

RAPHAEL.

What woe can come
Into those courts of old beatitude?

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

Hast thou not felt its presence there?

RAPHAEL.

Yes — nay —
I know not . . . When I enter Heaven gate,
Fear comes upon me, for I seem to feel
Some subtle waning of accustomed joy,
Some dying off of music — thin, minute,
As the single cricket amid chorusing fields,
Whose ceasing breaks the rapture. Often, too,
Wan faces shun me in the woods of light
And voices of vague dolor die away
Along the living lilies as I come.
But this I held a phantasy of dream,
Bred of too earnest looking on the blight
That falls on mortal things.

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

It is no dream;
Though more mysterious, more dark than dream.
Momently fades the splendor, momently
Silence and dissonance like eating moths
Scatter corruption on the choiring orbs.

RAPHAEL.

No one declares the cause?

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

The cause is here,
Here in the vagrant courses of the moon,
Who makes her lair and wanders for her love
After her own loose law; in yonder stars,
Gay spendthrifts of their plentitude of fire;
In this most dissolute earth, who decks herself
With gorgeous phantasy, and delicate whim,
And paces forth before the worlds to dance
A maiden measure, modest lids downcast
To hide her harlot's guile; but more than these,
And more than all, unutterably more,
Here in the wild and sinful heart of man, —
Of all the fruits upon creation's vine
The thirstiest one to drain the vital breast
Of God, wherein it grows.

RAPHAEL.

Too fiery sweet
Gushes the liquor from the vine He set,
Man the broad leaf and maid the honeyed flower!

The shepherds creep back, and stand peering from behind the tree at the angels.

RAPHAEL.

Musing.

What if they rendered up their wills to His?
Hushed and subdued their personality?
Became as members of the living tree?

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

A whisper grows, various from tongue to tongue,
That so He will attempt. Those who consent
To render up their clamorous wills to Him,
To merge their fretful being in his peace,
He will accept: the rest He will destroy.
The boy whispers to Raphael.

RAPHAEL.

What wilt thou, little friend?

SHEPHERD BOY.

Hither, sweet god!
But let the ghostly centaur stay behind.

SHEPHERD.

Lean o'er this rock and look into the gorge.
See how their torches dip from ledge to ledge.
They race beside some shape the torrent bears:
The eddies seize it now, and leaning out
Over the pool they stop to howl their hymns,

And, now it plunges, how they madden down
With laughter keen above the drumming foam.

RAPHAEL.

Is 't not a man's torn trunk?

SHEPHERD BOY.

See those behind
Grasping the antlers of the lunging stag,
That bellows when their torches bite his flanks!
I know the witch who rides him!

RAPHAEL.

Come away
That is a bleeding head she holds aloft
Above the clutching of her comrades' hands!

SHEPHERD BOY.

No more thou 'lt shun their orgies in the wood,
Throat of the hermit-thrush and ring-dove eyes!
Throat of the mourning thrush, thy songs are done;
Sad ring-dove eyes, the lids have shut you in!

SHEPHERD.

That is his harp the dancers bear before,
Mocking his solemn songs of other gods
And other lives than theirs.

RAPHAEL.

Musing.

Those who consent
He will accept: the rest He will destroy!

SHEPHERD BOY.

Look! look! the ghostly centaur goeth down.

ACT I

Time: as in the Prelude

PERSONS OF THE MASQUE

Raphael
Uriel
Michael
Azaziel
The Angel of the Pale Horse
The Angel of the White Horse
The Angel of the Red Horse
Spirits of the Throne-Lamps
The Lion of the Throne
The Eagle of the Throne
The Angel of the Tree of Knowledge
Spirits of the Saved
Spirits of the Lost
Moon-Spirits
Voices

SCENE I.

A high mountain pass, down which flows a brook, with pools and waterfalls. Early morning.

Raphael.

Climbing, sings.

On earth all is well, all is well on the sea;
Though the day breaks dull

All is well.
Ere the thunder had ceased to yell
I flew through the wash of the sea
Wing and wing with my brother the gull.
On the crumbling comb of the swell,
With the spindrift slashing to lee,
Poised we;
The petrel thought us asleep
Till sidewise round on stiffened wing,
Keen and taut to take the swing
With the glass-green avalanches in their swerving plunge and sweep,
Down the glassy, down the prone,
Swift as swerving thunder-stone,
We shot the green crevasses
And we hallooed down the passes
Of the deep.

On earth all is well, all is well.
In the weeds of the beach lay the shell
With the sleeper within,
And the pulse of the sleeper showed through
The walls of his delicate house
That will wake with the sun into silver and purple and blue.

Where the creek makes out and the sea makes in
Between the low cliff-brows
Was borne the talk of the aldered linn
Matching the meadow's subtile din;
And hark, from the grey high overhead
The lark's keen joy was shed!
For what though the morning sulky was
And the punctual sun belated,
His nest was snug in the tufted grass,
Soft-lined and stoutly plaited,
And shine sun may or stay away
Nests must be celebrated!

Drowsy with dawn, barely asail,
Buzzes the blue-bottle over the shale,
Scared from the pool by the leaping trout;
And the brood of turtlings clamber out
On the log by their oozy house.
Round the roots of the cresses and stems of the ferns
The muskrat goes by dodges and turns;
Till she has seized her prey she heeds not the whine of her mouse.
Lovingly, spitefully, each
Kind unto kind makes speech;

Marriage and birth and war, passion and hunger
and thirst,
Song and plotting and dream, as it was meant from
the first!

He climbs higher, and sings.

Peering in the dust I thought
"How all creatures, small and great,
For his pleasure God hath wrought!"

When I saw the robins mate
Low I sang unto my harp,
"Happy, happy, his estate!

"Down curved spaces He may warp
With old planets; long and long,
Where the snail doth tease and carp,

"Asking with its jellied prong,
A whole summer He may bide,
Wondrous tiny lives among,
Curious, unsatisfied."

Still climbing.

The trees grow stunted in this keener air,
And scarce the hardiest blossoms dare to take

Assurance from the sun. Southward the rocks
Boast mosses and a poor increase of flowers,
But all the northern shelters hold their snow.
Such flowers as come, come not quite flower-like,
But smitten from their gracious habitudes
By some alarm, some vast and voiceless cry
That just has ceased to echo ere I came.
These white buds stand unnaturally white,
Breathing no odors till their terror pass;
Those grey souls toss their arms into the wind,
Peer through their locks with bright distracted eyes
And hug the elfin horror to their breasts —
Poor brain-turned gypsy wildlings, doomed to birth
In this uneasy region! . . . Yonder lift
The outposts of the habitable land.
Ages of looking on the scene beyond
Have worn the granite into shapes of woe
And old disaster.

He climbs higher, to where the ravine debouches into the Valley of the Judgment.

Each time when I stand
Upon the borders of this monstrous place,
I still must question wherefore it was flung

Thus ruinous with toppled peak and scaur,
Sheer from the morning cliffs that hold up Heaven
To nether caverns where no foot of man
Has clambered down, nor eye of angel dared
To spy upon the sluggish denizens,
If any dwell so deep. What giant plow
Harnessed to behemoth and mastodon
Set this slope furrow down the side of the world?
And to what harvest? . . . Here the sons of men,
Living and dead and yet unborn, might come
Unto the final judgment; here the lost
Might make one desperate stand. . . . What moveth there?
What leonine and wingèd shape is he
Steals up yon gorge all desolate of light
Whence voices of fierce-tongued and desperate streams
Sound faint as throats of nooning doves? Till now
Never have I beheld a living thing
Amid these wastes. What manner beast is he
That he hath power to awe me, though removed
So far the fallen vastness of a cliff
Wherefrom a temple might be quarried, looks
Fit for a shepherd's sling? . . . Surely he comes

From nameless battle yonder in the depths;
But whither steals he homeward there aloft?
What lair is his cloud-hidden in the snows,
Whose mates and loves wait 'neath the desert
palms
To hear him tell his deed? Huge was the fight
That left that mighty prowess broken so!
For sorely is he broken: now he stops
And lies exhausted by an icy pool,
Now labors up the shale, skirts the bald top,
Drops with fierce caution down the further slope
Eyeing the next hard pass. I wonder . . . ? No . . .

Strange! 't was a blood-drop fell upon that flower
A-tremble from the brink. Another here
Upon the ground-moss — nay, upon my hand —
It falls all round me! . . .
Looking upward.
Ah, an eagle goes
Lame from the battle, mate or duelist
Of him who crept by yonder. Even here
I see the vast wings, shattered and unpenned,
Almost refuse their labor; now he swerves
To rest upon a needled dolomite,
Then upward grievously another stage

Toward some sad eyrie where his heart abides.
I too must seek my eyrie — sad enough,
Since there my heart abides not any more,
Amid the waste infinitudes of light
Missing the flow of day, the refluent dark;
Amid the bliss of unconcerning eyes
Remembering woman's anguish, man's resolve,
Youth's wistful darling guess, kindled and quenched
And quenched and kindled yet a little year
In eyes too frail to hold their meaning long
Where chance and enmity conspire with death.
He flies up the Valley.

ACT I. SCENE II

Above the peaks that crown the head of the Valley of the Judgment.

RAPHAEL.

Flying.

Soon will the cliffs of Heaven give easier way,
For though my heart grows human, yet my frame
With immaterial things accordance keeps,
And to my feet these spiritual hills
Feel native, and the climate kind to breathe;
Still kindlier for the shredded mist of song
That wanders here at morning and at eve
Whispering witless words and prophecy.

VOICES.

Above.

Through the vines of tangled light
In the jungles of the sun
Swept the Hunter in his might
And his lion-beagle dun
Gaped for prey to left and right.

O'er the passes of the moon
Strode the Hunter in his wrath:
The eagle sniffed the icy noon,

"Master, knowest thou the path?
Shall we meet thy foe-man soon?

"On what interstellar plain,
'Mid what comet's blinding haze,
Storm of star dust, meteor rain,
Shall we spy his crouching gaze,
Leap at him, and end thy pain?"

Peace is on the heavenly meres,
Sabbath lies on Paradise;
But the little Throne-Lamp fears,
For she sees the Master's eyes,
And she tastes the Master's tears.

RAPHAEL.

Many an age your song has hovered round
This theme of Heaven's distress. What mean ye now?
Was that the lion-hound of which ye sing
Crept wounded hither, masterless, this hour?

VOICES.

As before.

Where had his gadding spirit led?
Beside what peopled water-head

Stooped he, or on what sleeping face
Was he intent the dream to trace?
Had creature love upon him fawned
Or had he drunk of mortal mirth
That he knew not what a morning dawned
Over his darling earth?
Heard not the storm, heard not the cries,
Heard not the talk of the startled skies
Over the guilty earth?

RAPHAEL.

Those dubious voices fade, and in their stead
Succeeds a sound more anxious and perturbed,
Voices and mutterings of supernal wrath
Or whisperings of fear. . . . Ah, there aloft
Upon the beetling rosy crag they stand,
The pale horse and the white horse and the red!
What rage vermilions his expanded wing?
Why streams his mane so fiery on the wind
Back from his staring eyeballs? What should make
His brother's steady candor pulse and throb
And falter like the light on cavern walls
Rocked under by the tide? O never yet
Did the pale horse seem terrible as now,

Pawing the margent cliff and snorting down
Pale fire into the Valley! . . . Brothers, hail!
I fare from outland. Tell me what befalls.

ANGEL OF THE WHITE HORSE.

He strays too much abroad. He hath not heard.

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

They say that he has lived too much in the sun
And waxes mortal, mortal. We shall see.

ANGEL OF THE RED HORSE.

Saw'st thou aught stirring in the valley deeps?

RAPHAEL.

Far down below a beast crept wounded hither.
Why gaze ye on each other thus aghast?

ANGEL OF THE RED HORSE.

Cast ye that way — the passes and defiles!
This way will I.
The Angels of the Horses disappear.

RAPHAEL.

What news has spread concern
Even to these marks and purlieus of God's dream?

Below the sun's pale rim a paleness moves,
Grows larger, blots the disc with deepening light....
And now above the Valley treads a shape
Too lordly to be aught but Uriel!
Poised on a peak he halts to gaze behind;
Now wingeth nearer, in the Eagle's track —

URIEL.

Approaching.
Hail, brother.

RAPHAEL.

Hail! Saw'st thou the fight below?

URIEL.

Of what I saw I cannot spell the sense,
Too darkly hid for me!

RAPHAEL.

Share me at least
Thy news, though scant. That winged and brindled bulk,
Whence came it and what quarry did it seek?
And the great eagle, was it mate or foe?

URIEL.

No earthly beast it was, no earthly bird,
Seeking no earthly quarry. More than this

I know not how to say, ere I have mused
Where in the sun's core light and thought are one.

RAPHAEL.

But yet conjecture clamors at thy heart.

URIEL.

Thou knowest what whispers are abroad in Heaven;
How God pines ever for his broken dream,
Broken by vague division, whence who knows!
And pangs of restless love too strong to quench
Save by the putting of creation forth, —
Quenched then but for a moment, since the worlds
He made to soothe Him only vex Him more,
Being compact of passion, violent,
Exceeding quarrelsome, and in their midst
Man the arch-troubler. Fainter whispers say
He ponders how to win his prodigal
By some extremity to render back
The heritage abused, to merge again
Each individual will into his will:
Till when, his pangs increase.

RAPHAEL.

A nine days' tale.
I hold Him no such weakling! Yet... and yet...

I have beheld . . . I know not . . . pallor
couched
On brows that wont to beacon; through the orbs
Quivers of twilight, hints and flecks of change. . . .
We cannot be, we would not be, I deem,
The same as ere space was, or time began
To trellis there life's wild and various bloom.
— We linger. Let me hear.

URIEL.

Some things He made
Out of his wistfulness, his ecstasy,
And made them lovely fair; yet other some
Out of his loathing, out of his remorse,
Out of chagrin at the antinomy
Cleaving his nature; these are monstrous shapes,
Whereof the most abhorred one dwells below
Within the caves and aged wells of dark
Toward which this Valley plunges. There it waits
Hoarding its ugly strength till time be full.

RAPHAEL.

How nam'st thou him?

URIEL.

The spirits meditative
Darkly name him: The Worm that Dieth not, —

Perhaps the scourge reserved for those who prove
Rebellious in the event, perhaps himself
Scourge of the Scourger, biding but his hour
To 'venge his miscreation. So he lies,
A thing most opposite to spirit-kind,
Most hated by the Four who guard the Throne,
Within the viewless panoply of light
Immediately ministrant. To them,
But to the Lion and the Eagle most,
Is given to gaze in the Eternal eyes
Like hounds about a hunter's knee, that watch
Each passion written on their master's brow,
And having read his trouble, steal away
To taste the troubler's flesh beneath their fangs.
So stole away the Lion of the Throne,
The Eagle for his aid. Beneath the moon
Last night I came upon them stealing down,
Too eager on the scent to mark my flight.
Even to the splintered curb of the last profound
I followed, and thence heard the battle rage
Bellowed above by the loath elements,
Till dawn showed in the east, an ashen dawn
Clotted and drizzled o'er with sullen light.

RAPHAEL.

Their hearts were faithful. They were fain to save
The Master from some sad extremity. . . .
But not in yonder depths, alas, doth lie
The arch-foe of his peace. Would it were so!
A monster bred to hatred in the dark.
Would it were so! not rather, as we fear,
Man the uplifted stature, the proud mind,
The laughter!

URIEL.

Speedily our doubt shall end,
For not much more delayeth the event.
— My watch is set within the sun, and thither
My hour constrains me.

RAPHAEL.

Heavenward I. Farewell!

ACT I. SCENE III

A garden in Heaven. The Eagle sits on the Tree of Knowledge; the Lion and the Angel of the White Horse rest beneath.

ANGEL OF THE WHITE HORSE.

Deep in the purple umbrage droops the bird,
His sick eye sealed beneath the weary lid

Which scarce his right wing's torn and gaping gold
Disfeathered hideth, since long hours ago
He sidewise tucked his wounded head away,
Shunning the light's offense; and through the boughs
Let sink this mighty pinion sinister
A vast and ruined length, whereof the plumes
That yesterday planed sunlike o'er the Throne
Are all blood-rusted now and misted on
With obscure breathings of a nadir clime.
Between the Lion's paws a thousand flowers
Have withered since he laid him groaning down,
And in uneasy slumber racked with dreams
Flingeth at whiles a sanguine froth abroad
To sear what rests of herbage or of bloom
Unwithered by his breath. They saw me not
Though close I tracked them up the cloudy heights,
Nor once have marked me through the exhausted hours
While here I wait the time to question them.

Hark! in their dreams they speak, and in their dreams
Do act again their awful enterprise.

THE EAGLE.

Creep softly, softly! Heaven's streets are still,
Each seraph sentry drowseth on his hill,
The winds of song are folded, and as flowers
Folded are all the domes and dreaming towers.
Creep softly, softly; I am with thee, mate!
Softly I soar above the shrouded gate,
And till thou comest past the warding swords
Lone in the outer moonlight I will wait.

THE LION.

Wing swiftly! For the walls of chrysopras
Have melted at my roar to let me pass;
But Heaven is up and peers with mazèd eyes,
And wings are weighed to hinder our emprise.
Wing swiftly, swiftly, down the glooming air,
Past cloud and precipice and mountain stair,
For ere another morning drowns the stars
We must have met the Worm within his lair.

THE EAGLE.

Drear are the depths, O brother,
Bitter the fight!
Vainly we stand by each other.

Thy might and my might
Are as straw, in the flame and the smother.

ANGEL OF THE WHITE HORSE.

O ye familiars benedite,
Who, hidden in the eternal glow,
Keep guard about the Throne,
What things were given to your sight
Ere to the hold of such a foe
Ye dared to venture down?

THE LION.

Awaking.

Ages and ages we gazed,
Stricken at heart and amazed,
Till the morning look
From his brow was strook,
Silver and vair
In the flame of his hair
And his lip with anguish crazed.

Then low I spoke to my mate,
"My heart must unburden its hate.
I will walk through the pathless woods
Where the wild stars hatch their broods,
I will girdle the steppes

Where the meteor creeps
Like a slug on the rimy sward.
Perhaps at the trampled brink
Where the Bear goes down to drink,
Perhaps where on the purple leas
Dance the young Pleiades,
Somewhere at length
I shall laugh in my strength
Spying the Shape abhorred,
Somewhere at last
I shall break my fast
On the flesh of the Foe of the Lord!"

THE EAGLE.

Wearily thou crep'st back
Sore from the track;
Thy hide was torn and thy tongue was black.
Long thou did'st slumber and deep.

THE LION.

A voice came in my sleep
Saying, "Why wander so far?
Nearhand lieth the earth
Full of rumors of war,
Of passion and pride no dearth.
There in his cavern cold

Lurketh the Dragon old;
He lies and pastures, plain to see,
On God's heart, sluggishly,
As once he sucked of the fruits of gold
Ages ago, on the Eden tree.

ANGEL OF THE WHITE HORSE.

Hearken! A wind walks in the Tree
Though the lily-heads are still,
From bough to bough inscrutably
It feeleth out its will;
And now the leaves, a-tremble long,
Utter impulsive song.

THE ANGEL OF THE TREE.

Not in the loosened whirlwinds that invade
The sun's white core with shade,
Not in the wandering tribes of fire that sweep
With rapine through the deep,
Not in the venom of the caverned Worm
That drowseth out his term,
Nay, not in these or aught akin to these
Consisteth of God's groaning and disease
The incorporeal germ.
Though all that He hath made
Rebels and is exceeding turbulent,

Though all his loins' increase
Go after pleasures other than He meant,
And with excessive claims
Drain and defile the founts of his content, —
Yet only one of all the shapes He brought
Out of the gulfs of thought,
One only creature of his quickening hands
Hath from its brow
With reckless laugh and with reiterate vow
Stripped clean away all decencies and shames;
Till with continual strife
And divagant demands
Of separate life,
The searching and the scornful heart of Man
God's inmost being maims.

THE EAGLE.

For naught have my wings been broken,
Vain are the wounds of thy paws!
Hark what the Tree hath spoken.

ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

Hush! For a murmur shakes the bloom
That once drank Eden dew,
A shadowed wind like a word of doom
Darkens the branches through.

THE ANGEL OF THE TREE.

Now draweth on the time declared of old
When He shall make division of the fold,
Shall winnow out the kernels from the chaff,
Shall tread his grapes, and in a silver cup
Chalice the good wine up
And cast away the pummace and the draff.

Too long and much too long
He hath endured his wrong.
A little vine of life He set to grow
Not far off from the footstool of his feet,
That it might be in spring a pleasant show
Of budding charities,
In autumn clothe itself with temperate sweet
Of love's long-mellowing fruit
So mild the angel youth might pluck and eat
Nor feel the mortal savor trouble shoot
Across their holy ease.
But now the vine,
Grown waste and riotous, has sent its root
With monstrous loop and twine
In circles nine times nine
About the bowels of his holy hill,
And million-fold its mouth

Has drunk his songful springs and quenched his
veins with drouth.
Twelve shapes of sculptured dream
On Heaven's twelve gateways gleam,
Jasper, chalcedony, and jade,
Beryl and lazuline;
And there-amid the rank leaves of the vine
Earthy and lush
At morn with laughter push,
At evening droop and fade.
Its carnal fruits are insolently laid,
With stealth and hasty birth,
Even in God's streets and in his garden bowers,
And from the topmost glory of his towers
Singeth and maketh mirth
The exultation of its sudden flowers.
Long and too long hath his compassion shrunk
From laying of the axe unto the trunk;
Nor, though the blade is ground, and kindled white
The furnace, will He quite
Even now,
Even now, though day is late,
Utterly burn and cast into the slough
The thing He made to love and still is loath to
hate.

But first He will put off eternity
And put on body of their flowering clay,
That thus brought near He may familiarly
Close in each ear the word of pleading say.
Each blinding heart that stubborns all astray
Shall hear Him calling closer than the blood
That both its ruby gates with tumult fills;
And to the wild procession of their wills
Raving idolatrous in the sacred wood,
His voice of poignant love
Though quiet as the voice of dust to dust
Shall clearly sound above
The beaten cymbal and the shrewd-blown shell,
Saying as soft as rain,
"The gift I gave I fain would have again,
Ye have not used it well!
Break ye the thyrsus and the phallic sign,
Put off the ivy and the violet,
A dearer standard shall before you shine
And for your lustral foreheads ye shall twine
A fairer garland yet,
When the processions mild
Shall greet you and behold you reconciled
And sing you home across the deathless asphodel.
But ye who will not so,

Take up the phallus and the wreathèd snake,
Let the wine flow,
And let the mountains echo to your yell.
Your ways lie by the burning of the lake
Long kindled for your sake:
Be ye not slow,
But go
Urging your panther teams through the wide
woods of Hell!"

ACT II

Time: during and immediately after the Crucifixion.
The outlying plains of Heaven. Storm and darkness.

RAPHAEL.

But now the air was thick with panic shades
Who made no answer when I cried to them
Across the vortices of spiritual dark.
Upon what stricken plain have I been flung,
Whose miscreations blot with leaves like hands
The far horizon light? Some glow-worm ghost
Flees yonder, pauses, turns, and flees again:
A woman spirit, by the anguish sweet
Wakes in me at her anguish. Sister, hear!

THE SPIRIT OF THE THRONE-LAMP.

O Light undimmed, if thou art powerful,
Speak to the wind! For see, my wings are torn
And shelter not my lamp; 't is almost spent.

RAPHAEL.

Me too the wind afflicts. Together thus
Our wings will shield the flame. Already, see,
It climbs and steadies in the crystal bowl,

And purges half the terror from thine eyes,
Thou love-lamp of the Lord! Are these his storms?
By his allowance are we thus distraught?

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

His throne is empty and Himself is gone.

RAPHAEL.

Child, fright hath crazed thee. Lean thy shaking breast
On mine: shut out the terrifying dark.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

He died with grieving o'er the world He made.

RAPHAEL.

We live in Him; with Him shall all things die.
Bright burns thy lamp; take heart, and tell me soon
What hath befallen in Heaven.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

I know not well.
My secret lies upon my heart too long. . . .

RAPHAEL.

Nay, tremble not. Rather look out and see
What presence comes; its influence makes cheer;
'T will be some spirit glad and resolute.

Put by thy wings and look; my eyes are blind
Watching the feverous pulsings of thy lamp.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

'T is he whose tent is pitched within the sun,
But hardly glad, no longer resolute.
Even Uriel's lordly light the wind subdues.

RAPHAEL.

Hail, Uriel!

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

Hail!

URIEL.

Hail, brother! Sister, hail!

RAPHAEL.

Close, lend thy breadth of wing! Thou art a strength.
Speak, if thou knowest what has come to pass.

URIEL.

Something I know, and hither through the storms
That vex the deeps and on disastrous shores
Fling all frail stars that coast and merchant there,

I come to learn the sequel — if to learn
Be mine, in such a matter.

RAPHAEL.

Speak.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

Oh, speak!

URIEL.

'Neath pleachèd boughs and vines of ancient fire
In the white centre of the sun I lay,
And watched the armies of young seraphim
Naked at play on the candescent plains,
When suddenly the skies of flame were rent
In sunder, and the plain became a sea
Whereon the whirlwind walked through weltering lanes
To the sun's core. With pain I made my way
'Twixt element and angry element.
Vast shapes of gathering and dissolving fire
That seemed as beast and bird, and awful frames
Of shadow, dubious whether bird or beast
Or fish or reptile, hidden until now
In shifting caverns of the photosphere,
Rose up across my path; and in their eyes
Sat fear, and on their limbs astonishment.

At last, long battling and bewildered oft,
I gained the solar coasts. Wide round I saw
Each planet passion-changed, each haggard star
Reeling from flight and swoon, and the great deep
Toiled like a runner's heart who runs with death.
Calm at confusion's centre stood the Earth,
A spiritual nimbus round her brow
Like as a woman angel-visited,
Sightless and deaf to all things save her swoon
And her heart's solemn hallelujah.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

Oh,
What hath He sent upon the joyous Earth?
The Earth that has the blue and little flowers
Thou brought'st me once to wreath my lamp withal,
Earth-lover! But they faded very soon,
And left a nameless hunger in my heart.
Thy Earth was chosen, Raphael! Art thou glad?

RAPHAEL.

Not glad nor sorry, sister, since not yet
I know the meaning of our brother's words.
Earth-wandering, and the shows of restless time,
Have weighed the eyelids of my spirit down.

Speak, Uriel, and speak plain. What followed then?

URIEL.

That rapt and solemn aspect of the Earth
Soon drew me to her through the shuddering air;
And circling swiftly round her as she went
I neared the twilight verge that dipped toward night.
Here on a sunset hill I stayed my wings.
Rabble of people and much soldiery
Poured thence into their city gates; the place
Was steeped in level spendor after storm,
And like to pillars of advancing fire
Three trees of crucifixion loomed, whereon
Three men hung crucified, one beautiful
Beyond the measure of Man's flowering clay,
Conspicuous o'er the world placed for a sign.
Slowly to meet my gaze the dying lids
Were lifted, and the faint eyes swam on mine —

RAPHAEL.

Nay, sister, sink not! We are three: be strong.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

I know whose eyes swam faint on thine! I know
The sorrows that He suffered for his world,

Ere ever He put off eternity
And put on clay, to be by hands of clay
Hung for a sign!

RAPHAEL.

Above the pausing wind
Hearken! a rush of pinions. Who are these
That put an influence in this bitter air
Like Spring when she comes galliard from the south?

URIEL.

The globe of amber light wherein they fly
Goes ashen in the flaws. That ship of souls
Tacks in the wind's teeth and is blown abroad
Nigh Heaven's last confines. Now it veers again,
And groweth larger: they will pass this way.
Brother, lift up thy voice and sing to them.
These be the spirits that within the moon
Wander the lucent forests; shy are they
Amid their wood-thoughts and their shy love-thoughts,
Only by song their minds are quickly swayed.
Wide has the ocean been for their frail wings,
And wild the panic that has driven them forth
From their still lunar isle. Thy song shall be
A kindly net to snare them as they pass.

RAPHAEL.

Sings.

Shore-birds wet with deep-sea dew,
Fold your wings and stay your flight;
Stay, stay!
Long was the way,
Grieved with wind is your tender light,
Stay, till our love rekindle you.

Wood-birds that through lunar glens
Flood the noon of night with singing,
Hearken, hearken!
Our minds undarken:
O'er your phosphor forests winging,
Say, what shadow scared you thence?

The moon-spirits alight in a circle round the three angels.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

How fair they must have been ere yet their light
Was ruined with the wind and flying spume,
Being so fair, though ruined!

FIRST MOON-SPIRIT.

Who are ye
That seem so safe when every shaken world
Voideth its tenantry, and even those stars

That keep the marches and strongholds of space
Flee with affrighted eyes down alien deeps,
Or cling to the necks of comets, whispering words
That stop them in their courses, though they be
Violent souls and outlaw.

URIEL.

We are such
As share God's sorrow in his evil time,
And wait the issue of the desperate draught
He drinks this hour to win surcease of pain.

SECOND MOON-SPIRIT.

Speak simply to the simple; make thy words
Accordant to our minds; our element
Is the moon's meek, unintellectual day.

URIEL.

You in the moon have felt his pangs more near
Than may the passionate dwellers in quick worlds
Wrapped in their own hot being; for your sphere
Has cooled the angry metal in its veins,
Its spent volcanoes utter now no more
Their proud and hasty meanings; age by age
Your world tends back to silence, rendering up

Its selfhood and control into his hands
Whence it rebelled, like all his prodigals,
To spend the hoard of fire He dowered them
with
Too rashly. So it hangs, a doubtful ground:
Now, brooded on by powers of heavenly peace,
It goeth darkling and your hearts are dumb,
Now, caught within the orbits of desire,
It gathers ghostly splendor; in your woods
Old rites are paid, and o'er your crystal peaks,
That burn at the heart like genie-haunted gems,
Sweeps revelry so wild that mortal men,
Shepherds or sailors, gazing half a night,
Wander at dawn brain-crazed.

THIRD MOON-SPIRIT.

Angel, we wait,
We wait with trembling till thy lips declare
This present hour's disaster. Whose the arm
That broke our steppes in twain, and from the
roots
Of cloven hills haled shapes of former men
And frames of monstrous ravin, ages dead?
Whose mouth was set against the moon-children
To blow their sheeny pleasances to dust

And scare them from their world?
What plains are these
Whose spiritual pulse of light and dark
Throbs as if hope and terror struggled there?

URIEL.

These are the plains of Heaven, least create
Of God's creation, nearest to his hand
When He would discreate, as now perchance,
The deeps that teem with rebel energies
Wanton, unteachable, intolerable,
Whereof the soul of man, though meant to be
His dearest pride and joy, is frowardest
And first to vex Him: were Man's will subdued,
The rest beneath his banners soon would swarm.
Long hath He warned and pleaded, but to-day
With a most searching bosom-whisper pleads;
For in their likeness clad He gives Himself
To die that they may live, accepting Him,
Or, still rejecting, and preferring still
Their own unto his pleasure, may be cast
To outer darkness and the second death.
These storms and perturbations are his throes,
And here we wait until He reassume
His attributes and kingdom.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

Will He come?
And will the ancient peace be ours again?
Speak, brother, will it be?

URIEL.

Hope still is ours.
Tremble no more, sweet Flame! Good hope is ours.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

My secret lies upon my heart too long!
Since first the trumpet told of Time begun,
And in the seven bowls the seven flames,
So white before and still, a patient praise,
Leaped up in restless colors, fear hath stood
A whispering eighth among the sisters seven,
A thin small voice singing above our songs,
A hush beneath our hush. Each side the throne
The mystic olive trees began to blow,
And on the candlesticks that burn beneath
Dropped dying bloom and fruitage mortal ripe.
When evening spread upon the holy hill
Its excellence of peace, small restless wings,
To Heaven unnative, fluttered round our lamps,
Forever circling nearer till they threw
Into the flame their lives of longing dust,

And though we plucked the char out hastily
A climbing rust had dulled our torch of praise.
Nay, where the very breast of God should be,
Forever panoplied with viewless light,
Gnawed darkness like a worm, and when this wind
That never came till now, blew wide and thin
The splendor of the Throne-stead — hush, bend
close! —
His eyes were old with pain. Then all at once —
O brothers, is it hours or æons since? —
Intolerable lambence lit the air;
The sea of glass whereon the nations stand
At morn to carol, curdled red as blood,
And rolled a moaning billow to the shore;
The Eagle screamed; upon the tabled gem
Where was the footstool of God's feet, lay prone
The Lion's whining muzzle; and the Calf
Bleated beneath his six-times-folded wing.
My sister lamps were quenched, but ere I fled
I crept up past the Lion's awful paws,
Up past the shrouding light, and saw His place
Was empty. . . . Is it hours or æons since?
I found the shadowed fields about me, grey
Each hearted amaranth and asphodel,
The living forests with their veins of light

Looped thickly, and the burning flowers between,
The living waters, and the lily souls
Along the waters — all a stricken grey!
Where'er I fled or turned it still pursued —
That Nothingness that sat upon the Throne;
And now it waits to seize me — yonder, here!

URIEL.

Hush, be of better comfort. Through the plain
Auroral pallors wake the asphodels;
The wind at last is still; and eastward far
Beyond the friths and islands of that sea
Which spreads before his dwelling in the Mount,
Behold, beginning glories star the dusk,
As if the clouds rolled burning from the throne,
To show us signs and wonders risen there.
And hark! the happy presage of keen wings
Ingathering from the corners of the winds;
Large light, and silvery calls and far replies,
And deeps of song that call unto the deeps.

RAPHAEL.

His agony is done: a little while
He tarries, but He surely comes again
Even though but for a little.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAMP.

Let us join
These hasting companies whose steady flight
Goes tempered to all manner instruments
Borne in their midst by hidden taborists,
Lute-players, and them that pluck the dulcimer —
All sweet musicians! Surely these go in
Unto some holy matter.

RAPHAEL.

Surely. Come!

ACT III. SCENE I

A peak above the Valley of the Judgment. Between midnight and dawn of the Day of Judgment.

RAPHAEL.

Alas, on this lone height my pinions fail,
And half my dreaming world unvisited!
As a sick woman, who, when morning glooms
Must leave for aye the house where she was wed,
Yearns to behold the thrice-familiar rooms,
And rises trembling, and with watch-lamp goes
From chamber unto chamber, stopping now
To muse upon her dead child's pictured brow,
And now to dream of little merriments
Enacted, and of trivial dear events,
Until her weakness grows
Upon her, and she sinks and cannot rise, —
So, since upon the sad and prescient skies
The darkness of this ultimate night was shed,
My feet from haunted place to haunted place
Of my familiar earth have kept their pace:

Alas, that ere the half be mused upon,
And while the coming up of dreadful day
Is still an hour away
My wing is broken, and my strength is gone!

Star after star goes out above the peak,
And only from the morning star is shed
Keen influence. Great star! He is not weak,
His pinions fail not; for he never quaffed
This frail and fiery air that mortals drink:
He has not heard when little children laughed;
He has not watched old pensioners break their bread;
To woman's lips he never held the draught
Of anguish, that a man-child might be born;
The May woods never saw him hiding there
His wings and flaming hair
To watch the young men pluck the budded thorn;
Nor has his mouth put off its seraph scorn
To hang with startled cry
Of grievous inquiry
Above the stoic forehead of the dead.

O heart of man, how I have loved thee!
Hidden in sunlight what sweet hours were mine

Of lover-like espial upon thine;
Thrilled with thy shadowy fears, half guessing
The hope that lit thy veins like wine,
Musing why this was bane and that thy blessing,
My angel-ichor moved by all that moved thee;
Though oft the meanings of thy joy and woe
Were hid, were hard to know;
For deep beneath the clear crystalline waters
That feed the hearts of Heaven's sons and daughters,
The roots of thy life go.
O dreamer! O desirer! Goer down
Unto untraveled seas in untried ships!
O crusher of the unimagined grape
On unconceivèd lips!
O player upon a lordly instrument
No man or god hath had in mind to invent;
O cunning how to shape
Effulgent Heaven and scoop out bitter Hell
From the little shine and saltness of a tear;
Sieger and harrier,
Beyond the moon, of thine own builded town,
Each morning won, each eve impregnable,
Each noon evanished sheer!

Thou fiery essence in a vase of fire!
What quarry gathered and packed down the clay
To make this delicate vessel of desire?
Who digged it? In what mortar did he bray?
Whose wistful hand did lead
All round the lyric brede?
Who tinted it, and burned the dross away?
"He, He," (doth some one say?)
"Whose mallet-arm is lift and knitted hard
To break it into shard!"
Were that the Maker's way?
Who brings to being aught,
Love is his skill untaught,
Love is his ore, his furnace, and his tool;
Who makes, destroyeth not,
But much is dashed in pieces by the fool.

O struggler in the mesh
Of spirit and of flesh
Some subtle hand hath tied to make thee Man,
That now is unto thee a wide domain
To laugh and love and dare in for a span,
And straightway is a prison-house of pain,
A den of loathing, and a violent place,
A hold for unclean wing and cruel face

That mock the searèd heart and darkened brain,—
My bosom yearns above thee at the end,
Thinking of all thy gladness, all thy woe;
Whoever is thy foe,
I am thy friend, thy friend!
As thou hast striven, I strove to comprehend
The piteous sundering set betwixt the zenith
And nadir of thy fates,
Whose life doth serious message send
To moon and stars, anon itself demeaneth
Below the brute estates.
Wild heart, that through the steepening arcs art whirled
To a bright master-world,
And in a trice must blindly backward hark
To the subtèrrene dark,
Deem not that mighty gamut-frame was set
For wanton finger-fret!
No empty-hearted gymnast of the strings
Gave the wild treble wings,
Or flung the shuddering bass from Hell's last parapet.
Though now the Master sad
With vehemence shall break thee,
Not lightly did He make thee,

That morning when his heart was music-mad:
Lovely importings then his looks and gestures had.

Whatever cometh with to-morrow's light,
Oh, deem not that in idlesse or in spite
The strong knot of thy fate
Was woven so implicate,
Or that a jester put thee in that plight.
Darkly, but oh, for good, for good,
The spirit infinite
Was throned upon the perishable blood;
To moan and to be abject at the neap,
To ride portentous on the shrieking scud
Of the arousèd flood,
And halcyon hours to preen and prate in the boon
Tropical afternoon.

Not in vain, not in vain,
The spirit hath its sanguine stain,
And from its senses five doth peer
As a fawn from the green windows of a wood;
Slave of the panic woodland fear,
Boon-fellow in the game of blood and lust
That fills with tragic mirth the woodland year,
Searched with starry agonies

Through the breast and through the reins,
Maddened and led by lone moon-wandering cries.
Dust unto dust complains,
Dust laugheth out to dust,
Sod unto sod moves fellowship,
And the soul utters, as she must,
Her meanings with a loose and carnal lip;
But deep in her ambiguous eyes
Forever shine and slip
Quenchless expectancies,
And in a far-off day she seems to put her trust.

. . . .

O Morning Star! that dost arise
Haughtily now from off thy flaming throne,
And standest in thy wings' outspreaded zone,
With hand uplift and intense vision glad,
More kindling while thy brother planets fade, —
Wilt thou, the seldom-speaker, speak and say
If this, if this be then the far-off day
When God shall give the substance for the shade?
When Man shall wake, and be no more adrad
To lose the precious dream he dreamed he had,
And the long groping of his heart be stayed?

. . . .

He answers not; the globèd light he wears
Largens and largens like a wondrous flower,
And in the midst his wavering radiance fades.
Behold, upon the waters, them that be
Above the heavens, how the lily light
Blooms mystical and vast! till all the stars
And all the gathered clouds that wait the day
Are blotted by its rondure. Dimly grows
From height to depth of that magnificence
A splendor sad that taketh feature on. . . .
Lo! where God's body hangs upon the cross,
Drooping from out yon skyey Golgotha
Above the wills and passions of the world!
O doomed, rejected world, awake! awake!
See where He droopeth white and pitiful!
Behold, his drooping brow is pitiful!
Cry unto Him for pity. Climb, oh, haste,
Climb swiftly up yon skyey Golgotha
To where his feet are wounded! Even now
He must have pity on his childish ones;
He knoweth, He remembereth they are dust!

. . . .

Earth slumbers; and the freshening winds begin
To blow from out the unuprisen east;
Yet still abides that awful Eidolon

Large on the face of Heaven, and its light
Is as the patience of a thousand moons
Upon the peaks and gorges of the vale.
Now on that giant forehead slowly dawns
Again the star, the bright, the morning star;
Amid the changeful lampings of his orb
The Angel stands, with keen out-spreaded
wings,
And lifted hand and intense vision glad,
As when he led his brother orbs in song.
But yet no word nor any breath of song
Begins upon the region silences:
All's hushed as ere the first-created throat
Was vocal.
Now remoter wonders wake,
Impatient glories gather and transpeer
That sky-suspended Image. Three by three
The beryl gates, the gates of chrysoprase,
And those that are a very perfect pearl
Open, and all the citadel of God
Even to the bright acropolis thereof,
The temple of the ark of the covenant,
Lies open, steeped in wroth light from the
Throne;
And all the heavenly folk are busy there.

ACT III. SCENE II

A peak above the Valley of the Judgment. Twilight of the Day of Judgment.

MICHAEL.

God's vengeance is full wrought, unless this form
That labors from the dark mists of the Vale
Be one whose strength has overlived our wrath,
And the last hunger of whose heart shall be
To creep from out that mass of death, and wait
High on these ruined hills for death to come
At nightfall, when the last strong soul must die.
Nay, 't is no mortal creature, though he wears
A fallen unhappy splendor, and his wings,
All eyed and irised like the gladdest ones
That glimmer in the pageantry of Heaven,
Are folded sadly o'er his downcast eyes
As now he sits and dreams. 'T is Raphael.
Michael descends.
Why sitteth Raphael disconsolate
After the manifest glories of this day?

RAPHAEL.

The rest may keep the glory.

MICHAEL.

Wilt thou share
The love-feast of the saved in Heaven to-night
With hidden traitorous thoughts clouding thy heart?

RAPHAEL.

Never again! Never again for me!
Never again the lily souls that live
Along the margent of the streams, shall grow
More candid at my coming. Never more
God's birds above the bearers of the Ark
Shall make a wood of implicated wings,
Swept by the wind of slow ecstatic song.
Thy youths shall hold their summer cenacles;
I am not of their fellowship, it seems.
God's ancient peace shall feed them, as it feeds
These yet uplifted hills. I would I knew
Where bubbled that insistent spring. To drink
Deep, and forget what I have seen to-day!

MICHAEL.

What thou hast seen? The splendor of his power
Sent forth against the wicked; his right arm
Cleaving unbearable glories, lifted high

To hurl his chivalry down slopes of flame
With wheels and tramplings; the wide threshing-floor
Become a furnace; drop by anguished drop
The oozing of the wine-press of his wrath;
The gross pulp cumbering the floor of the world,
The little priceless liquor chaliced up,
Borne back 'mid plaining silver and sweet throats
For the Spirit's earliest house-gift to the Bride!
Thou would'st forget this gladly, Raphael?

RAPHAEL.

Yes, yes; right gladly.

MICHAEL.

Yonder where the fight
Flung its main sea of blood and broken souls
Into the nether dark, I saw a youth
Cling for a moment to a jutting rock
And gaze back at the angel shapes that rode
The neck of the avalanche; between the wings
Of the pale horse and the red his vision pierced,
Between the ranks of spectral charioteers,
Supernal arms and banners prone for speed,
Up to the central menace of the Hand
That launched that bulk of ruin; and I saw

A light of mighty pleasure fill his eyes
At all that harness and dispatch of war
Storming aslope. He laughed defiance back
Ere down cascades of blood and fire was flung
His body indistinguishably damned.
How should this puny valor rise in glee
To greet the power that crushed it, and thy heart,
Angelically dowered, stand listless by?

Raphael.

Perhaps for thinking on another sight.
After thy chivalry passed down and left
The valley-trough cumbered and heaped with death,
A broken girl o'er-lived to find the breast
Her arms had clung to in the awful fall
Strange, alien, not her lover's boyish shape
She deemed she held, but gross with years and sins.
Her changed eyes heavily a moment roamed,
Then settled back on his, the darkened mate
Whom chance had flung her at the hour extreme
In scornful bridals. From his brow she drew
The war-worn locks, and laid her kisses there
Unutterable with life's èxtreme tenderness.

. . . .

Hark! where the last of those redeemed go by,
Companioned of the hasting paranymphs
Who hear afar the Spirit and the Bride
Say "Come," and see the nuptial torch alight
Ere they have put their saffron vesture on, —
Too eager for their goal to join the song
Those throats redeemèd raise, save that their
hearts
Throb rhythmic with it, systole dim
And bright diastole, with wax and wane
Of spirit-splendor pulsing to the tune.

REDEEMED SPIRITS.

Sing, as they fly past below.

In the wilds of life astray,
Held far from our delight,
Following the cloud by day
And the fire by night,
Came we a desert way.
O Lord, with apples feed us,
With flagons stay!
By Thy still waters lead us!

As bird torn from the breast
Of mother-cherishings,
Far from the swaying nest

Dies for the mother wings,
So did the birth-hour wrest
From Thy sweet will and word
Our souls distressed.
Open Thy breast, thou Bird!

RAPHAEL.

Another neareth, chill upon the wind;
Wan fire-flakes stain the clustering spires of cliff,
From ledge to shoulder hapless echo clings
And falters up.

MICHAEL.

The pale one's homing-song!
To-day he makes good harvest, and his voice
Has autumn meanings; jealously and late
His steed foregoes the trampled threshing-stead.

RAPHAEL.

Terrible angel! Never until now
Have I beheld his features through the veil
Of pallor that enwrapped them; now at last
Their terror is distinct, for triumph now
And large appeasement lights them visibly,
As o'er his horse's neck he strains for speed.

MICHAEL.

One flieth with him, rosy-lit within.

RAPHAEL.

Not as the battailous breathing of thy mates
Enrubies them: more vesperine and sad.
'T will be the lordly light of Uriel, dimmed.
Hail, Uriel! Quench thy speed.

THE ANGEL OF THE PALE HORSE.

Flying.

Why tarry now?
God's acts are throughly complished: Heaven stays
Till all her sons be gathered.

Flies past.

URIEL.

Alighting.

Here I wait
To see the swift reprisals Man shall take.

MICHAEL.

Blaspheme not, lest I hurl thee down to swell
The carrion sin that Raphael mourns above!

RAPHAEL.

Uriel's place is there, by those pale heads,
Those sightless eyes with awful question changed,
Those desperate broken hands cheated in death

With poor embraces chance and alien.
Not Uriel's only, — mine, and thine, and theirs
Thy warrior mates, and chiefly his whose breast
Bathed in some dawn's bright urge and wistfulness
Put out this lovely fruitage, this sweet vine
Of man the leaf and maid the honeyed flower
In mystic alternation, and when noon
Spread clamor in the pulses of the vine,
Was pined and plucked it up! Not so shall one
Deal with another's, much less with his own.

MICHAEL.

For sins not to be borne He cut them off.
Murders, adulteries, and acts unclean,
Idolatries, and broken covenants,
Violent hearts and unconsidering tongues.

URIEL.

The violence and the unclean acts were his;
Unto Himself himself brake covenant;
Before the monstrous fancies of his heart
His heart made heathen mummery and song.
Wherefore to-day himself He punishes.

MICHAEL.

Thy mouth uttereth darkness. Is all dream?
Human and heavenly deed unmeaning both?

RAPHAEL.

To Uriel.

Brother, thou art all wisdom, as I know
And still have proved rejoicingly, but now
Thy word indeed is difficult and dark.
Take not away Man's ancient dignity,
The privilege and power to elect his ways,
His kingly self-possession. Level not
The head that lies too low to-day. Snatch not
From brows abased the crown of personal will
Which made them noble, though it brought them down,
Being worn too carelessly, too like a wreath
Of ivy or poppies meant for holiday.
Man's agonies and ecstasies obscure
Were more than shadow-show! Not all in vain
His groping toward some quaint imagined good,
His blood shed for a scruple, his low days
Winged and illumined with long-suffering love!

URIEL.

Nay, not in vain were these, though otherwise
Bound with the sum of things than unto Man
Seemed likely, wearing that glad wreath he wore,
And going after good the headstrong way.

RAPHAEL.

We wait to hear this riddling talk made plain.

URIEL.

Truth is not soon made plain, nor in a breath
Fluently solved while the chance listener waits,
Nor by the elemental wrestling mind
Wrung from the rock with sobs. Myself have held,
Where in the sun's core light and thought are one,
Æons of question, and am darkling still.

RAPHAEL.

Speak, brother, though thy words be hard and
 scant.
The candle flame goes far a moonless night.

URIEL.

The worlds and all their tenantry are Him,
Even to the utmost archipelagoes
Gazed at by maritime angels ere they veer
Homeward, awestruck by omens and sea-signs
Known to no pilot of them, and far off
Watch the scared islanders beside the straits, —
All these, and whatso lies beyond our hail,
Are effluence of the life that moves in Him,
Thought of his brain, wish of his working blood:

Yet every separate creature of his thought
Hath separate claims and separate potencies.
Oh, not a sparrow falleth to the ground
But He regardeth it! Since ere it fell
A little gladness died away in Him.
And not a creature sinneth but He weeps
His own sin with his creature's — fourfold pain,
Since god and creature, false each to itself,
Was false each to the other. Not a heart
O'ercometh evil and mounts up to good,
But He o'ercometh and is lifted too.
Each life of clay that flowered in fragrant
deed,
Each grass-blade that grew willingly, each bird
That through the churlish weather hoarded song,
Not only worked its own salvation out
But helped Him in his old struggle with himself —
Or might have helped — or might have helped, it
seemed. . . .

RAPHAEL.

Yet did not, thy disconsolate ending says.

URIEL.

Who shall dispute finalities with Him?
Not Uriel. But as far as Uriel sees,

Salvation lies annulled in yonder Vale
And prone are God's true helpers.

MICHAEL.

Clay of clay!
Wassailers, fleshlings, quarrel-mongers, thieves
Of pleasure, plighters of unholy troth,
Mimes, gypsies, idol-breakers, idol-smiths,
Dervishing fantasists — most likely help!

URIEL.

Unlikely: yet the marrow of his bones;
Heat of the breath of his mouth; corpuscles red
Energic in his veins, loud gainsayers
Of death's insinuating whisper, "Peace!" . . .
Before the Heavens were spread, or He himself
Rose from his changeless and unpictured dream,
These stirred in Him, demanding to be dowered
With individual shape and destiny, —
Each one a soul, yet each incorporate
With his great soul, which to far happy ends
Should henceforth in a million shapes of will
Immensely groan and travail, not with tears
Alone, but laughter, with singing as with sobs.
Oh, many a golden station on that march
Lie backward of us! when the armèd worlds

Broke leaguer round some conquered capital,
And in the pleasure-places of its kings
Sat down to feast, the unhelmed gleemen chanting
Victory past and victory to come.
Let me not darken thought with imagery!
Still the naked word escapes me, being too vast,
Too simple, for our little pictured speech.
This chiefly I would say: the restless joy
Which called God from his sleep and bade his hand
Depict much life and language on the dark,
Had other aims and meanings than are writ
In yonder Valley for an epilogue.
Man's violence was earnest of his strength,
His sin a heady overflow, dynamic
Unto all lovely uses, to be curbed
And sweetened, never broken with the rod!

RAPHAEL.

Why did He quench their passion? I have walked
The rings of planets where strange-colored moons
Hung thick as dew, in ocean orchards feared
The glaucous tremble of the living boughs
Whose fruit hath eyes and purpose; but nowhere

Found any law but this: Passion is power,
And, kindly tempered, saves. All things declare
Struggle hath deeper peace than sleep can bring:
The restlessness that put creation forth
Impure and violent, held holier calm
Than that Nirvana whence it wakened Him.

URIEL.

This day declares He deemeth otherwise.
The Shining Wrestler, tired of strife, hath slain
The dark antagonist whose enmity
Gave Him rejoicing sinews; but of Him
His foe was flesh of flesh and bone of bone;
With suicidal hand He smote him down:
Soon we shall feel His lethal pangs begin.

RAPHAEL.

Fiercer than those that clove thy burning realms
And sent grey winds to waste the plains of Heaven
When on the Cross He sought to purchase peace
And lure his wayward world back to his hand!

MICHAEL.

His lightning dry thy tongue! Why should our minds

Peer and conjecture of the danger past?
Thou knowest what glory followeth.

RAPHAEL.

Yes, I know.
The clouds at last rolled burning from the Throne
And let us see the risen wonders there.
Again I hear the gathering psalmody
Chant out the clement tale — eternal God
Made clay, by hands of clay unto the Cross
Hung for a sign, that who beholding Him
Should find Him very God, might dwell with us
In endless light and life. Again I hear
The deep consenting chorus mount and merge
The wayward crests of treble into one;
But still between the calling deeps of song
Vague and unacquiescent hung my heart,
Conning the burden wistfully anew
In hopes to find the joy my comrades found
Hid in the dubious notes. Vague hung my heart,
Wistful as morning boughs that watch the moon,
Not strong as now when I have seen all clear
And o'er the ashes of the world declare —
Listen! Are there not voices in the Vale?

MICHAEL.

They talk together. Some die not till dark.

RAPHAEL.

Aye, until dark! 'T will be a starless night.

ACT IV

Time: evening of the Day of Judgment.
A rock in the Valley of the Judgment; about the rock, and filling the whole trough of the valley, lie the bodies of the lost. Twilight.

RAPHAEL.

My lot is cast with these: I watch to-night
Here islanded in death. Say me not nay:
Till from the last lip anguish is unwreathed,
From the last brow the frown of horror fades,
Here I must sit, witness and comforter
If any more conspicuous strengths survive
To mutter or make signal in the dusk.

MICHAEL.

Nay, brother, stay not. Though thy words are calm,
Thy desperate eyes betray thee; thou resolvest
Some sudden irremediable thing.
The past is done, and, whether well or ill,
Necessitously. Put on that robe of song
Woven of youngest light and over-runed

With flickerings of the golden elder speech,
Wherein thou led'st the lily souls along
Choregic o'er the unclouded psalmody
And wert so starry long agone! Arise!
My soul is heavy at thee. Thou art wan;
Thine eyes are dull yet wild, even as these
Who lie involved and heaped along the Vale
Seeming in death to threaten and to rave.
Arise and come away! Why tarry here
To mourn above these outcast, since the fan
Hath winnowed them and left no righteous one?
Rather arise, make glad thy countenance,
And through the courts of day let herald throats
Softly declare thy coming, virgin hands,
From that oraculous tree whose leaves are tongues,
Laurel thee best of Heaven's lutanists
And seat thee at the minstrel-hand of God.

RAPHAEL.

You urge me well. I think my songs to-night
Would cheer their festivals: I have a theme
Of very present gladness, deeply conned.
But if amid the gratulating chant,
If through the dances orbed and interorbed,
Furnished with solemn symbol and device,

Perchance there stole a quite unfurnished shape
Nakedly risen from this company?
Holding up horrible accusing hands
Against the nuptial light? That were scarce well.
I fear my lute would glance and jangle off
To themes as good unsung. Hark!

MICHAEL.

'T was a voice,
Not distant.

RAPHAEL.

Nay, 't is yonder, — he who lies
Half lifted from the jetsam of this sea
Across that ragged reef. Another, hush!
A woman's voice, was 't not? And see, below —
That aged throat would fain articulate. . . .
They taste sweet speech ere the long silence comes.

A YOUTH'S VOICE.

Do any live but me? Do any wake to hear
A word spoke in the dark before I die?

AN OLD MAN.

An old and wakeful spirit rests thee near.

A YOUNG WOMAN.

Long had I lain asleep, but wakened at thy cry.

THE YOUTH.

Not all discourteous is the Conqueror's heart,
Since now of that good strength I wore at noon
Ebbs back a little part.

OLD MAN.

Enough to syllable thy soul's young scorn,
Though all unripe, unwise;
And haply rouse some one of these that lie
Fixing the dark with undivining eyes
Of human wit and seemliness forlorn,
To speak their separate word or unto thine reply.

THE YOUTH.

A song of scorn I minded to have sung,
But all the words are faded from my tongue.
Mysteriously withdrawn,
Out of this desolation I am gone
Aloft into the light of other days.
My heart runs naked in the wind, more fleet
Than are my flying feet,
Above the misty foss and up the mountain lawn
To seek the place of Morning where she stays.
The silver summits held across the dawn
By some gigantic arm, like wrought candelabras,
Kindle their wicks of praise

To light the temple builded not with hands
Above the prostrate lands,
And the religious winds, song-stoled,
Pacing the mighty nave
Fill azure dome and star-held architrave
With hymns unto the gods that grow not old, —
Lords of the joy of life made known
Not unto gods alone,
But perfectly to man and beast and stone,
And by the atomies with rapture shared,
But ne'er by poet's golden mouth
Nor by the west wind singing to the south
Fitly declared.

Oh, for a voice
Here in the doors of death
To speak the praise of life, existence mere,
The simple come and go of natural breath,
And habitation of the body's house with its five
windows clear!
O souls defeated, broken, and undone,
Rejoice with me, rejoice
That we have walked beneath the moon and sun
Not churlishly, nor slanderous of the bliss;
But rather leaving this

To the many prophets strict and sedulous
Of that sad-spoken god
Who now hath conquered and is surely king,
Have given our lips for life to closely kiss,
Have heard the sweet persuasion of the sod
And been heart-credulous
To trust the signs and whispers of the spring.

SECOND YOUTH.

Various the reasons why we could not pay
The price exacted from us!
My ear, though fain, I might have turned away
From spring's love-startled promise,
I might have given up the glorious sea
And the majestic mountains might for me
Have ceased to be;
God, with one sudden rinsing of his hand,
Might have wiped bare
The earth-ball of its deeds and pageantries,
Yea, even of light and air,
That on the stark circumference I might stand
And choose deliberately, unvexed of these,
Between my will and his.
Then I had said, with cheerful voice and strong,
Somewhat dismayed, yet with a cheerful voice,

"This many days, Lord, I have thought it long
Till I could put away creation's noise,
The tragic streets, the poignant drip of rains,
But chiefly the loud speaking in my veins
Concerning this and that desirable.
Now you have put me in a quiet place,
Take but away your too expectant face,
And all shall then be well.
Then I can ponder, as I meant to do
And as I singly long since thought was mine,
The mysteries divine;
Make quiet proof of you
If you be verily my lord or no,
And, having found you to be truly so,
Shall understand for sooth,
That down the eternities I may launch my mind
Not as a tame hawk haggard down the wind,
Whom huntsman's cry pursueth,
But as an eagle without bell or jess,
Obedient alone to his soul's lordliness.

THIRD YOUTH.

Better with captives in the slaver's pen
Hear women sob, and sit with cursing men,
Yea, better here among these writhen lips,

Than pluck out from the blood its old companionships.
If God had set me for one hour alone,
Apart from clash of sword
And trumpet-pealèd word,
I think I should have fled unto his throne.
But always ere the dayspring took the sky,
Somewhere the silver trumpets were acry, —
Sweet, high, oh, high and sweet!
What voice could summon so but the soul's Paraclete?
Whom should such voices call but me, to dare and die?
O ye asleep here in the eyrie town,
Ye mothers, babes, and maids, and aged men,
The plain is full of foemen! Turn again —
Sleep sound, or waken half
Only to hear our happy bugles laugh
Lovely defiance down,
As through the steep
Grey streets we sweep,
Each horse and man a ribbèd fan to scatter all that chaff!

How from the lance-shock and the griding sword
Untwine the still small accents of the Lord?

How hear the Prince of Peace and Lord of Hosts
Speak from the zenith 'mid his marshalled ghosts,
"Vengeance is mine, I will repay;
Cease thou and come away!"
Or having seen and harkened, how refrain
From crying, heart and brain,
"So, Lord, Thou sayest it, Thine —
But also mine, ah, surely also mine!
Else why and for what good
This strength of arm my father got for me
By perfect chastity,
This glorious anger poured into my blood
Out of my mother's depths of ardency?"

A CONFUSED VOICE.

Not very long to-day
Thy arm held back the mischief of the tide!
Thou could'st not check the play
Of scythes, the awful chariots beside!
Thy blood has ebbed a little from its pride.

A GIRL'S VOICE.

I waited patiently and thought to hear
The secret reason dark,
The secret reason dark and dear

Why none of us had heart to mark
The pale evangel whispering from the sphere.
For oft the moon between the garden boughs
Her looks of summer longing would efface,
And come to be a halo round the brows
Of Him who died to give the sinner grace,
Now saddening o'er His purchase from that place.
And oft at dawn I heard the Sons of Morning
Silvered with lovely menace fill the sky,
And heard their solemn lips deliver warning
What time the central singer lifted high,
In the deep hush twixt ode and palinode,
The sangrael of the sun, brimmed with redeeming
blood.
But how might I attend the minatory
Voices of many angels breathing doom,
When from the window of the little room
My love's face had not faded, and the story
His wakeful mouth had whispered in the gloom
Spake in my pulses yet? And how at evening turn
To feel those sad eyes down the moonlight yearn,
When mouth to mouth and breast to aching breast
I held my lover close, and by his nest
The nightingale, scarce master of his mood,
Now after faint essay

And amorous dim delay
Suddenly steeped his heart in song's mad plenitude?

A WOMAN'S VOICE.

What unripe girl is this who maketh bold
To speak for lovers at the extreme hour,
Yet fancy-paints the flower?
Yet hides with image-gilt the naked gold?
O sisters, brothers, help me to arise!
Of God's two-hornèd throne I will lay hold
And let Him see my eyes;
That He may understand what love can be,
And raise his curse, and set his children free.

ANOTHER WOMAN'S VOICE.

My life was a rank venomed weed
And hers, I think, a flower;
But my harsh voice shall have a power
Fiercer than hers to plead.
About his knees with curses I will cling,
My veins I will break open, till He see
The barb of the intolerable sting,
The tongues of the immitigable fire
He planted there to fret and fumble through me,
To craze and to undo me,

Till on the cruel altars where He threw me
I slew my heart's desire!

OLD MAN.

Of double fetters be not fain, my child,
To these thou wearest be thou reconciled.
Spread not before his dark averted gaze
(Now that He holds his hand and seemeth satisfied)
The love that called you unappointed ways
And filled your hearts with pride.
A little while He left you free
In passion's privilege
To god it on the peaks of personality,
But ye have walked too near the hither edge.

Yet once I thought —
My old heart meekened to an evening mood
By dint of years and much beatitude —
He was not jealous as the prophet taught,
Nor loving-tolerant as mild teachers held
But swayed to mystical participation
Of various delight
By every chrysalid's meandering flight
And million-footed onset of heroic nation;

To instant joy impelled
By every jet of life that from Time's fountain quelled.
So deemed I, musing on the headstrong glee
Of children at my knee,
But He ordained his ways after another fashion.

FOURTH YOUTH.

'T was not the lover nor the warrior stirred
His jealous arm to smite,
Nor he who longed to launch forth as a bird
In far and lonely flight
To seek the truth of things, nor he who heard
The choral winds in Nature's temple chaunting.
All these He could endure,
Since his creation and its furniture
They merely used, nor vexed his ears with vaunting
Themselves creators too
And fashioners of worlds, and pilots of them flaunting
Beside his in the blue.
But some there were infatuate, audacious,
To whom the world's vast girth
Seemed niggard and unspacious;

Who, having clambered or been borne on wings
Above the realms of sense
From off God's secret altars ravished thence
The plastic fire of his imaginings
And brought it down to earth.

Then, pale with supernatural intention,
We builders of the over-world arose,
And softly to their houses of ascension,
Orbing as soft as April buds unclose,
But bowelled of the furious lava-stream,
Star after ordered star went up the heavens of
dream:
Each from the other ever differing,
Glory from glory,
And each a world summed and replete
With all the human heart forebodeth well
Or hoardeth to repeat
Of tragical and sweet
In earthly summer and the mortal spring
And man's peculiar story,
Yet by the mind made an immortal thing,
Patiently purged and weaned of its corruptible.

Oh, how should Man into the dust be trod,
Who is himself a god?

How should the lord of each enchanted isle
For gazing on a brother god's high sacrificial
sorrow
Say himself low and vile,
Or for that Sufferer's sake
Teen to his own undarkened being borrow,
And in a gloom of abnegation break
The wand wherewith he summoned from their
sleep
The whirlwinds of the everlasting deep,
And souls of men and spirits of lost hours
And spring's sequestered firstlings, the sky flowers,
Bound to his golden powers?

MICHAEL.

I wait no longer on their stammering tongues!
Once more I pray thee rise and come away.
The Valley darkens fast, and Heaven stays
Thy single voice to make its concord full.

RAPHAEL.

These voices we have hearkened lack as well,
To make such concord as I care to hear.

MICHAEL.

Then curse thee for a stubborn heart! — Nay, nay,
I will not curse thee whom I love. . . . Take heed

Lest any wing patrolling in the dark,
Mistaking thee for one of these, should smite.

RAPHAEL.

Already from the deeps approacheth one,
Staining the limbs and faces of the dead
With amber as he flies. What clime has blown
Azaziel's radiance to so blear a tinct?

AZAZIEL.

Flying past.

Woe! Woe! unto the dwellers in this Vale.
Woe unto them who wait the second death!
Prepare to meet the Worm that dieth not!

RAPHAEL.

Azaziel, hear! What meaneth . . . ?

MICHAEL.

He is past,
Bearing his message further. How it sobs
And falters on the wind!

RAPHAEL.

In the deeps begins
A myriad lamentation. . . .

MICHAEL.

Nearer now,
And mixed with keener individual cry. . . .

RAPHAEL.

The sea of death sways moaning and recoils,
Bristling with serried surf of forms uplift,
Postures of supplication and despair,
Forlorn attitudes!

MICHAEL.

From the starless sky
A star shoots screaming, hushes in mid-flight,
And stands at gaze above the vasty caves,
The cañons and the agèd wells of dark
Toward which this Valley plunges.

RAPHAEL.

Far below
Disastrous splendor glares above the abyss,
And in the midst a bulk of sinuous shade
That lifts and swings a snaky head aloft
Surveying where to strike. . . .

MICHAEL.

Away! Away!
Even now his pendulous neck doth sweep the Vale
From wall to wall, incredibly advanced
Leagues hither, though his lewder folds are still
Hid backward in the abyss. Away! Away!

From yonder peak we may behold all safe:
To linger here even spirits dare not.

RAPHAEL.

Go;
I tarry. Let me take thy mighty sword.
A minstrel's hand can swing a blade at need.

MICHAEL.

Not so. Forgive me this my violence!
Thy soul is all distraught and desperate,
And I must save thee in thine own despite.

He overpowers Raphael, and bears him aloft just as the enormous swinging head of the Serpent blots out the scene.

ACT V. SCENE I

Timc: as in Act IV.

An exposed upland: one side looks down into the Valley of the Judgment, on the others the snow-peaks fade into the visionary cliffs and slopes crowned by the battlements of Heaven. Sunset glow still lingers on the heights: the moon is rising.

RAPHAEL.

Awaking.

Where are we, brother? I remember naught.

MICHAEL.

Safe lifted o'er the Vale, and none too soon.

RAPHAEL.

Help me to rise.

MICHAEL.

Nay, rest thee yet a while.

RAPHAEL.

Something of portent passes in the Vale —
I cannot well recall, but know 't is so
By thy wild looking. Can thy vision pierce

So downward through the mists? Mine eyes are weak
And blink at the mild moon.

MICHAEL.

Spare thou to look.
Even me it grieveth, thee it will destroy
With present heart-break.

RAPHAEL.

O remembrance now
Creeps moaning through the sea-halls of my mind, —
A sluggish neap, with loss and wreckage strewn!

MICHAEL.

The Serpent enters now that last defile
High lifted toward the spiritual hills.
Behind him as he came has silence fallen
And gesture ceased: final ineloquence.
These hither people are the lesser thewed
But more inspirited, who held the fight
Vanward against us, and who fell the first
Before the whirlwind of our going down.

RAPHAEL.

Is it too late to save this remnant few

For seed of a new world, planted afar
Beyond this trouble? Come, thy might and mine!
He lifts a questioning head and seems to stand
Hesitant at the mouth of the defile:
There give him battle. . . .

MICHAEL.

Nay.

RAPHAEL.

Then I alone.

MICHAEL.

Too late; and even if sooner, much too late!
He brings the second death; his fangs have power,
'T is whispered, on the flaming seraphim
To tarnish or to quench; one venom fleck
Flung from his jaws, how might it lame and scar
Our substance archangelical.

RAPHAEL.

Yes, yes,
You give me reasons to it. Lovelier
Such scars upon the breast, though mortal proven,
Than that fair sigil set upon thy brow
The morn of thy first victory. Why live,
Why live, when all these wills that searched the
earth —

Until they found their one and inward love,
Refusing to be still — have ceased to search,
Though quite unsatisfied? To feel the night
Unvexed of longing, and the day purged blank
Of laughter and of sorrow and of brawl;
No pride of life to glory in the sun,
No ecstasy to mate the moon's increase,
No heart interpreting the twilight thrush —
All the heart's business done! Nay, not for me!
Mine ear hath lain too long on Nature's pulse,
I cannot miss that music. Let me go.

MICHAEL.

Still detaining him.

Govern thy heart and tongue. Nature, thou knowest,
Was but a bye-thought of the Eternal Mind,
A whim — extravagant, repented of,
And now in its chief element of Man
Annihilate and put away, save those
Who rendered up their wills to His, and share
This night with Him the immortal quietudes.

Lo, where the Serpent enters! Quick and dead
Loosen their maimed embraces. From beneath
Heaves the incumbent carnage. In the clefts

And on the headlands scattered souls arise
Expectant or imploring . . . Now he reigns
Instant among them, and their sayings-nay
Decrease and come to nothing.

RAPHAEL.

All is done:
The great refusal made. The wayward heats
That might have moved God's blood to sweetest ends
In dreams and deed, have bled themselves away,
And peace is his, though profitless.

MICHAEL.

Hush! Look!
The Worm goes on!

RAPHAEL.

What say'st thou? Speak!
Mine eyes are still too dim, I see not well
What passes 'neath the drifting fogs.

MICHAEL.

He mounts!
He lays his length upward the visioned hills,
The inviolable fundaments of Heaven!
There where he climbs the kindled slopes grow pale,

Ashen the amethystine dells, and dim
The starry reaches. . . . Now he coils his bull
About a foreland, and the nacrous light
It beetled with turns cinder. High he piles
His folds, and seems to note the upward way.
Hark, the trump sings to battle! I am called.
He flies upward toward the walls of Heaven.

RAPHAEL.

Alone.
O darkest creature of God's shaping thought,
Shamefulest born, in that unsacred hour
When, pining for the pools of ancient sloth,
His soul repenteth Him that He had made
Man, and had put that passion out to use!
Cleavest thou inward now to find the heart
That bore thee shuddering and hath fostered thee
With secret sweat of agonizing brows?
Has this day's great defection armed thy fang
And lit thy wrath to seek Him where He sits
Sickening amid his harsh-established peace?

On which side then shall Raphael be found, —
The sociable spirit, very friend of man
And Nature's old-time lover? Surely there
At God's right hand, with a loud song for sword

To beat the Spectre back when armies fail,
And cheer Him as the shepherd Israel's king.
He flies after Michael.

ACT V. SCENE II

Raphael stands on a promontory of the cloudy slope up which the Serpent has passed. The Valley of the Judgment lies far below.

RAPHAEL.

A mortal weariness beats down my wing;
I cannot farther. Here I must remain,
Whether I will or no a truant still,
While battle rages round the heart of God, —
A recreant on the very slopes where first
With wistful feet from Heaven adventuring
I sought those little flowers of shyest light
Whose earthy hue and palpitance would speak
A wild distress of sweetness, till my blood
Sang wander-songs, and pictured to itself
The happy outland chances of the spring.
I think none grow now in the muted dells
Nor on the chidden reaches; yet— perhaps —
If I should search as earnestly as once. . . .

My mind strays like a fevered child's to-night
And plays with leaves and straws, regarding not
How fate comes on next instant! . . . Not alone,
Not all companionless must I abide
Its coming, love be praised who sends me love
And comradeship now at my dearest need!
For hither through the wintry windelstrae
Flee, veer, and flee a fluttered company
With hands outstretched and groping. Woman-kind,
By the lorn influence that companions them
And hangs grief in the wind. . . . A taper's flame
Streams backward o'er each trembling hand. 'T will be
The seven dear sister spirits ancillary
Who tend their lamps of laud before the Throne.

Stay, sisters, stay! They swerve aside and flee
More terror-stricken still. I prithee stay;
'T is Raphael calls!

FIRST LAMP.

O then art thou too fled?
Haste, let us flee together! We had thought
All but the timid spirits still abode
The battle's outcome. Timid thou art not,

Though woman-gentle; is the battle lost?
Or won? Oh, surely won, since thou art here.

RAPHAEL.

I come from earthward. Mortal weariness
Beat down my wing, and I was forced to stay.
How goes the struggle?

FIRST LAMP.

In and in it stormed
From ring to lessening ring, until we fled,
I and the sister Lamps, save only one,
Our meekest and most patient flame of praise,
Whom naught could make afraid. Now by the wind
Distract, we wander on these withered hills.

SECOND LAMP.

How withered from the day thou brought'st us hence
Flowers for our lampads! — tiny troublous things
That living pierced us with a faint unrest
And dying left a nameless woe behind.

RAPHAEL.

Call up each sweetness over-lived, for soon
Sweet shall be sweet no more, nor sad be sad.

Momently yonder Heaven's heart of light
Throbs feebler, and the dark gains on the day.

Now where he runs afar, the sun hath felt
Sharp pangs delay his feet, for swiftly hither
In the distressful beaming of the moon
Comes on the wasted light of Uriel.

URIEL.

Approaching.

The dream is done! Petal by petal falls
The coronal of creatured bloom God wove
To deck his brows at dawn.

RAPHAEL.

No hope remains?

URIEL.

To save Him from himself not cherubim
Nor seraphim avail. Who loves not life
Receiveth not life's gifts at any hand.

RAPHAEL.

And life He loved not, though it sprang from Him?

URIEL.

He loved it not entirely, good and ill.

RAPHAEL.

For what end should we love an evil thing?

URIEL.

Better than I thou knowest, truant soul!
Who all the summer hours didst love to stoop
O'er insect feuds, herb-whisperings, and watch
The prurient-fingered sap startle the trees
To sudden laughter of bloom. Better than I
Thou knowest what lewd rebellion stings the core
Of nature, bidding every seed awake
To sacramental life after its kind;
Better than I thou knowest what cruelties
Rage round about each starry heroism,
Out of what murky stuff the lover builds
His soul's white habitation. 'T is not mine
To lesson thee how height and depth are bound
So straitly that when evil dies, as soon
Good languishes, nor how the flesh and soul
Quicken with striving, and when strife is done
Decline from what they were.

RAPHAEL.

Would He had dared
To nerve each member of his mighty frame —
Man, beast, and tree, and all the shapes of will
That dream their darling ends in clod and star —
To everlasting conflict, wringing peace

From struggle, and from struggle peace again,
Higher and sweeter and more passionate
With every danger passed! Would He had spared
That dark Antagonist whose enmity
Gave Him rejoicing sinews, for of Him
His foe was flesh of flesh and bone of bone,
With suicidal hand He smote him down,
And now indeed His lethal pangs begin.

FIRST LAMP.

To Uriel.

Brother, what lies beyond this trouble? Death?

URIEL.

All live in Him, with Him shall all things die.

SECOND LAMP.

And the snake reign, coiled on the holy hill?

URIEL.

Sorrow dies with the heart it feeds upon.

RAPHAEL.

Look, where the red volcano of the fight
Hath burst, and down the violated hills
Pours ruin and repulse, a thousand streams
Choked with the pomp and furniture of Heaven.

In vain the Lion ramps against the tide,
In vain from slope to slope the giant Wraths
Rally but to be broken. Dwindling dim
Across the blackened pampas of the wind
The routed Horses flee with hoof and wing,
Till their trine light is one, and now is quenched.

URIEL.

The spirits fugitive from Heaven's brink
Put off their substance of ethereal fire
And mourn phantasmal on the phantom alps.

FOURTH LAMP.

Mourn, sisters! For our light is fading too.
Thou of the topaz heart, thou of the jade,
And thou sweet trembling opal — ye are grown
Grey things, and aged as God's sorrowing eyes.

FIRST LAMP.

My wick burns blue and dim.

SECOND LAMP.

My oil is spent.

RAPHAEL.

The moon smoulders; and naked from their seats
The stars arise with lifted hands, and wait.

THE DEATH OF EVE

A Fragment

THE DEATH OF EVE

ACT I

A rocky mountain slope rising on the left by rude stone stairs towards Cain's stronghold in Nod, dimly discerned above. On the right and toward the rear the scene falls away to a wide desert country. In the foreground, on the lowest level of a terraced plateau, is a rudely sculptured well-curb. Behind this, on a higher level, a stone seat, known as the Seat of Supplication, faces the Mercy-Seat, a throne of the same primitive type, carved from the living rock. The mountain stair, which rises behind the Mercy-Seat toward the distant city, is barred, at a higher elevation, by a stone gateway.

On the Seat of Supplication sits Eve, shrouded. Her hand rests on the shoulder of Jubal, who sits at her feet. As the scene progresses, the sky gradually fades, then flushes with the colors of a tropical sunset.

EVE.

Yea, Jubal?

JUBAL.

Nothing, mother.

EVE.

Thy lips moved;
The hand upon thy knee rose as in question,
And fell as in reply.

JUBAL.

I slept; I dreamed.

EVE.

Sleep yet; the heat is strong.
Pause.

JUBAL.

I dreamed he came
At sunset here unto the Strangers' well
To know us and our errand.

EVE.

Soon or late,
They say; his custom.

JUBAL.

Aye, they say it is.
But why should travelers seeking to great Cain,
Wayfarers, weaponed only with their hands,
Or come, as now, in love and duty to him —?

EVE.

I know not. 'T is his pleasure.

JUBAL.

And 't is thine,
Being, O mother, even what thou art
And hast been what thou hast been — 't is thy will
To hide thy name, to wait obscurely here,
Where at Cain's feet the desert suppliants
Kneel to unload their wrongs!

EVE.

Question it not.

JUBAL.

But I must wonder.

EVE.

Wonder not either.

JUBAL.

Nay,
I will not then.

Pause.

At home 't will be the hour
When the parched flocks climb faster as they feed,
Scenting the upper cisterns. Downward again
Toward folding time.

EVE.

Gazing at the sky.

I think the sun at home

Sits not in such a shoulder of the heavens.
We fetch him all about and overtake him.

JUBAL.

So do we.
Pause.
Is it well that we do so?

EVE.

We make our journey; if the lights of Heaven
Move from their ancient places as we move,
Let the Heavens look to it; it is none of ours!

JUBAL.

Thou sayest; and Jubal rises to thy words. —
At home Eve never spake so.

EVE.

Jubal, Jubal,
I know not what is in me! I am changed
From all I was. Or am I back-returned
Through life's deep changes to my changeless self?
Look in my face, and say.

JUBAL.

Thy face is changed; —
And that behind the face, which looketh through,
Peers like a stranger.

EVE.

Since our latest guide,
Standing upon the red cliffs yester dawn,
Pointed and said, "Cain's City!" —

JUBAL.

Longer ago
The change came.

EVE.

Murmurs.

Know'st me.

JUBAL.

O mother, since the night
When thy loud whisper startled me awake,
And following thee in wonder from the tents
I found our camels houseled for the start,
And the wide moonlit stretches calling us, —
Since then, through desert perils, famine, beasts,
More ravenous men, and thirst the crown of terrors,
Thou art Eve, not that bowed soul we knew,
Not that great worn and patient majesty;
But like an angel going on an errand
Not for his lord but for his longing self,
Who burns from morn to morn and deep to deep

Toward his place, so Eve is, since the time
She fled, by night and stealth, from Adam's tent,
And took the wilderness.—To what purpose took,
She keeps from me too long!

EVE.

Have I not said?
To look upon my first-born's face again,
And know him what he grows to.

JUBAL.

I am content.

EVE.

Jubal believes I scant him?

JUBAL.

I am content!
There is no scanting in thee. Silence, speech,
Giving, withholding, doing, and letting be,
Sit on thee lovely as a change of jewels
And bounteous as the River of the South:
Forget my lips that they were troublesome.

EVE.

Why do you hold my words for less than truth?

JUBAL.

Nay.

EVE.

Say on.

JUBAL.

Freely?

EVE.

Say right freely on.

JUBAL.

Eve knows ere Jubal speaks, yet he will speak.
At home lies bed-rid Adam in the tent,
With wasted hands and slow blank eyes agrope
To find the sole things they remember plain,
The hands and eyes of Eve, who never failed
To meet that need till now. And Eve sits here,
Within her eyes a high and thirsty light,
Brighter than burning Adam ever stilled
In that far storied morning of their loves;
Within her hands — Alas, I speak too near!

EVE.

Speak on.

JUBAL.

And in her hands — I know not how
To say my meaning.

EVE.

Say, though.

JUBAL.

On her hands,
That lie so quiet and so empty here,
A look as if they seized the hands of God,
And dragged Him with her through his holy mountain
Unwillingly to do her glorious will.

EVE.

Draws him to her.

Nearer. Bend back. Now by sweet Adah's pangs,
It is a goodly boy's face. Is it strong
As it is fresh and goodly?

JUBAL.

It is his
Whom Eve chose out, a boy, and left unchosen
Others, firm men.

EVE.

What if she tried them first,
The others, the firm men? Seth, Enoch, all?
Thy father Lamech, too, and Irad, too?
Firm men, firm men! I shook them from their firmness!
Sinews and blood and heart-strings, at a word

Melted to water! At a woman's word,
Touching far off her cloudy enterprise!
Pause.
One more is left to try!
Long pause.

JUBAL.

Mother, I saw
When thou did'st speak with Seth.

EVE.

Startled.

Saw'st? Thou saw'st?

JUBAL.

I saw but heard not. Am no eaves-dropper,
No peep-thief neither, but mine eyes had looked
Before I knew 't was secret.

EVE.

Low.

When was this?

JUBAL.

Early the third night ere we fled away
From Adam's tent-place. In the camel-close
I sat among the beasts, for one was big
And near her time. 'T was star-dusk, very still;
Only the beast groan'd low and human-like,
Or nosed my stroking hand and held her peace.

Thereby, over against, a voice, thy voice,
Never the words, only the naked voice,
Heavy and scant, as if a half-dead tongue
Fashioned its meaning stiffly. Then the moon
Stood all at once her height upon the hill
And showed thy form and Seth's within the gate.
Thy face I could not see, but saw thy hands
Raised unto Seth, pleading or threatening,
And saw the face of Seth, with mortal fear
Disfeatured, — updrawn forehead, loosened jaw,
And staring eyes gone empty. — Then, as one
Who shakes the night-witch Lilith from his breast,
He came into his manhood, took thy hands
And drew them down, kissed thee, and spoke thee small
As one bespeaks a trance-awakened child,
Softly and small, until it knows itself
And its familiar things. So went ye hence.
And next day and the next Seth's eyes were on thee,
Frightened and vague; but Eve walked straight her ways
Not heeding him.

EVE.

Who heeds a broken staff?

— Nay, nay, that wrongs him! Broken not, but bent,
No more but bent a little. — A good son,
Tender and meek and patient with all men,
And most with me, child, most of all with me!
I blame not Seth. Let him look to it, then,
He blame me not. O would 't were by with blame!
When has the oak been proud against the willow?
Or the light aspen shook her jeweled hands
In scorn of the removeless mountain pine?
To every soul his stature, girth, and grain,
Each sovereign to its end: the use is all. —
And yet, and yet — Look you, he thought me crazed!
So did the others, or were ripe to think.
Some day they would have risen and stoned me forth,
To be like those banned women of the rocks,
Who haunt the savage summits of our land,
Aye, you have seen them! They were human once,
Daughters and sisters, mothers and right wives;
And now they sit there, high up in the sun
On noon-steeped crags, naked but for their hair,—
She-satyrs laughing with their satyr mates:

I might have sat aloft with them by now,
And thought not strange to be there.
Pause.

JUBAL.

Eve must know
Another thing, ere I have cleared my life.

EVE.

Clear thee!

JUBAL.

I saw her speak with Abel too.

EVE.

Looking fearfully about.
Thou sunlight shelter us! Abel?

JUBAL.

His ghost.

EVE.

The night we fled away?

JUBAL.

Thou know'st 't is so.

EVE.

How know? Albeit I blench to hear it said,
Yet I do talk with Abel, my lost son,
By night and day, forever!

JUBAL.

Day and night,
Life, death, the hid, the shown, are in thy knowledge.
In his simplicity hath Jubal spoke,
And now his heart is free.

EVE.

Not yet! Not yet!
Abel? Thine eyes saw Abel? His risen ghost?

JUBAL.

The thousand eyeballs of this flesh, they saw,
What time my crowding spirits, wild and pale,
Made all my curdled blood from head to heel
Their tower of outlook.

EVE.

By the altar? Was it?

JUBAL.

Yea, yea.

EVE.

Cain's altar?

JUBAL.

Abel's altar mound;
Though both be eat to nothing with the years.

EVE.

Aye, aye, the eating years! At first I thought
I was mistook; 't would be the farther mound.
After these years they should let something grow
there.

JUBAL.

Though salt were sown not, nor the stones not
flung,
No plant would spring within the awful vale
Where murder first was born. — I followed thee
Scarce hoping to come thence again alive,
And crouched apart while Eve did call on Abel;
Thrice did she cry on him.

EVE.

Ere I cried once
I knew 't was vain. He would not let me go.
Living and dead they failed me!
Pause.

JUBAL.

Lamech too!

EVE.

Ah, for thy father Lamech, honor him!
Good father, and good husband to his wives!
They point him and he goes, what man would not?
Both fair, and one right good; Adah is good.

Loves not much farther outward than her door,
But that is well for women, — narrow love,
Narrow and deep.

JUBAL.

Then 't is not well with Eve,
Who loves as wide as life, though deep as death.

EVE.

Once, once! No longer now, these years of years!
They would not have me so. — Great years of years
Since Eve in anguish called her wild heart in
And taught it what to do. — Yet, yet, thou sayest —
What said'st thou of me?

JUBAL.

What thyself said first,
O mighty Eve! Thy soul is back returned
Through life's sad changes to that joy it was
When first it soared into the new-made light.

EVE.

Seemeth almost it is so. — Years of years!
Pause.

JUBAL.

Hark! Heard'st thou?

EVE.

Women coming to the well.

JUBAL.

As the voices approach.

Mother, beseech ye, be as if we slept!
For they will mock thee as before they did.

EVE.

I care not for their mocking.

JUBAL.

Be besought!

CHORUS OF WATER-BEARERS.

Two groups, one of young, the other of old women, sing in alternation.

Old Women.

Like a hunter in his mountain walks the purpose of the Lord!

Young Women.

O, the prey alert and little, be its littleness its ward!

Old Women.

Like a linnet on the lime-twig sings the bow-string on the bow.

Young Women.

O, the serpent when he sitteth on his coils singeth so!

Chorus (in unison).

Even though, even though!
Be it ours to flee and double, be it His to bring us low.
Blessed she who tastes his arrow and lies broken in the wood.
She has fled, she has fallen : it is good.
They fill their jars at the well.

FIRST WOMAN.

What makes the witch-wife hither? Have ye heard?

SECOND WOMAN.

What make they all, who sit on yonder stone
To wait Cain's coming?

THIRD WOMAN.

The old tale.
Some sons of jackals, loping sharp-set by,
Have sniffed her hut, and stopped unbid to meat;
Some neighbor hath put sheep's-bane in her well;
An idle whirlwind, rising up to play,
Has wantoned with her little patch of dates,
And left it bleeding.

SECOND WOMAN.

Has none spoke with her?

FOURTH WOMAN.

Aye, to much purpose! She is sullen dumb,
Sun-crazed, or hath a spirit. 'T was my son
Who found her in the gates. "Cain!" would she cry,
And "Cain!" again. By what she mumbled else
She will be outlandish.

FIFTH WOMAN.

By raiment too.
And then the starveling camel, did you mark?
Longer in limb and muzzle than our breed,
The pelt more reddish.

FOURTH WOMAN.

Let us stir her up!

Some go toward Eve and Jubal. Abdera, a young girl, puts herself in their path.

ABDERA.

Ye shall not mock them!

FOURTH WOMAN.

What! Weaned since, swaddling-clout?

SECOND WOMAN.

The maid says well. They are all travel-spent.
They sit like souls foredone for weariness.

FOURTH WOMAN.

They feign! They feign! Saw ye? The stripling
peeps
And lowers beneath his arm!

SECOND WOMAN.

And let them feign.
Take up your jars, and take your singing up.
All except Abdera mount the path behind.

FOURTH WOMAN.

Looking back.

Look yon! Look yon! The little harlotry
Stops for her hire.

THIRD WOMAN.

'T will be the lad that pays!

CHORUS OF WATER-BEARERS.

As they ascend the slope behind, and pass through the gate.

Till the coming up of day,
Till the cool night flee away,
Till the Hunter rises up to pursue,

O my sisters, we will laugh, we will play!
Though He wake and walk anear us,
He is mused, He will not hear us;
Though He wanders lone and late,
He will never hear how mate whispereth to darkling mate.
Yea, and though He hear, and though!
Will He judge us, even so?
He is mused, He walketh harmless. In the shadowy mountain hid
We will lure our lovers to us, even as our mothers did!
When He cometh forth at dawn, and His anger burns anew,
As our hunted mothers did, even so we will do:
Flee and crouch and feint and double, leap the snare or gnaw it through!

EVE.

Who art thou? Tell us.

ABDERA.

Abdera.

EVE.

Whose daughter?

ABDERA.

Till now the daughter of captivity,

A leaf blown in by tempest of those wars
Which crushed the stem I grew to.

EVE.

And from now?

ABDERA.

Kneeling.

If thou art earthly and hast need of love,
Thy servant and thy daughter. — O receive me!

Pause.

JUBAL.

Mother, she waits. Wilt thou not speak to her?
Her countenance, that was so bright, is fallen.

Eve draws Abdera near and bends over her.

ABDERA.

To Eve.

Why weep'st thou?

Pause. To Jubal.

O why weeps she? At my words
She looked beyond, with thinking, sightless eyes,
As I have seen my father's gods to look
Out of the dreaming stone; and then — alas,
Tell me what 't is you weep for!

EVE.

Lifting her head.

Sweet my child,
My fair new daughter, 't is for thee I weep.

ABDERA.

No cause. See, I am glad now; all is well.

EVE.

Therefore I weep, that we all three are glad,
And all is well, thrice well.
She draws Jubal to her, also. To Jubal.
What say you, boy?
Hearts change! Here is a stranger in thy place.
— There is a wondrous vine called Jealousy;
It springs between this pulse-beat and the next,
And hangs the roofs of heaven with bitterness.
Does Jubal feel it growing?

JUBAL.

Nay, — I know not.

EVE.

To Abdera.
He knows not. Then, alas, we know too well!

JUBAL.

Touching his heart.
Mother, the Vine! I felt it springing here
Even as thou spakest, and hanging as it were
The roofs of Heaven, but not with bitterness.

EVE.

There may be other seeds I know not of,

That spring as fast, and load their trellises
With leaves of light and lovely fruits between.

ABDERA.

Some I have seen with fairy vans outspread
Sail high, and yet no wind, or good as none.
And some have hands and fingers: they will cling
To sheep or goat or ass, all one to them
So they be carried where they long to be.

EVE.

Aye, where they long to be! Winds of the world,
Blow as ye will and blow what seeds ye will
If this kind mingle in.

JUBAL.

She wonders at us.
Speak to her.

EVE.

Wonder'st thou? Are we so strange?

ABDERA.

I was brought young to Cain's fierce citadel.
And since, day after day, season by season,
Now stark alone and now in bands of trouble,
The hurt and hungry people gather in,
To crouch upon this stone. Some I have feared,

Yea, hated for the wickedness in them,
Being myself made wicked by that hate;
Some seemed to fade to nothing where they sat,
Scarce there at all, and hardly gone, forgotten;
Of some I asked in wonder, "Who are ye?
What countrymen, what errand, and what
cheer?"
My heart not beating till the answer fell,
And long, long wildly beating to remember. —
To-day I came, and lo, nothing to wonder,
Nothing to question of! Two trees of life
Planted from always unto everlasting
By the still waters; and my quiet soul,
With outspread hands and upturned countenance
In the bright shadow, saying, "Glory, glory!"

JUBAL.

Low.

One tree.

ABDERA.

Low to Jubal.

Thy parable?

JUBAL.

Indicating Eve, who sits in reverie.

She is the tree;
And I with thee stand singing in her shadow.

EVE.

Rousing.

What think the people of their master Cain?

ABDERA.

That he is master; that he is lord and king.

EVE.

No more?

ABDERA.

Some mutter darkly and apart.

EVE.

What should they mutter of?

ABDERA.

Looking about as in fear.

That Cain is old;
That as he grows more weak he grows more cruel.

JUBAL.

Cruel? To thee?

ABDERA.

The storm that breaks the tower
Roots not the little hyssop from the chink.
Nor do I hold him cruel of his will,
But in his withered blood a poison works,
Distilling wrath and panic. — Long ago,

In his hot youth, upon some jealousy
He slew his brother. Then the angry gods
Set on his brow a sign to know him by;
And since, in hopeless visions of his bed,
Or when the priestesses rave round his car,
Gashing themselves, and to their frothèd mouths
Setting the adder's mouth, or when he lairs,
His madness on, with demons of the waste —
The patient gods, the unwithdrawing gods,
Dropwise and piecemeal wean his soul from him.

EVE.

Old? Madness? Withered? Girl, can'st thou not
speak plain?
Mutter not thou, whate'er yon rebels do!
To Jubal.
Did she say "old"?

JUBAL.

What has she said amiss?
— She shrinks with fear.

EVE.

Old!

JUBAL.

Seth, though the later born,
Thou knowest, Seth too —

EVE.

Seth too? And what of him?
Yes, yes, all's clear. Seth truly! That is well.
Children as ye two be! To the dropped lamb
The yearling from the father of the flock
Stands not a hair apart in reverend time. —
And cruel, say they? He was never so!
Hasty and hot, a blood where rage would run
As swift as sun-fire through dry prairie grass,
But cruel — never that. — Thy shoulder, Jubal.
A faintness is come on me. 'T will pass, 't is passing.
Old — old and cruel.

She rouses again.

Girl, girl! What else was't, then?
Weak? As he grows more weak? Why I have seen
The young oak shudder in his wrestling arms,
And its torn roots come groaning from the hill,
When for a sport he did but breathe himself.
— Ages of years! — Thrust from his gate like dogs!
Weak, weak, indeed, to be afeard of us.

Her head sinks on Jubal's shoulder; her eyes close. Abdera kisses the hem of Eve's garment, rises, and takes up her jar.

ABDERA.

She set me in the garden of her love;
At first I grew, as ne'er by so sweet clime
A tree was told to prosper and put forth;
But at the last not so. — Sour were my fruits,
Apples of ignorance.
She turns to go.

JUBAL.

Where wilt thou go?
Stay yet! I thought — O ye two spake such things!
I thought — and thou wilt leave us now again?

ABDERA.

Let me not leave you! Whither should I go?
I know naught else. — I have been always here.

JUBAL.

He draws Abdera to him.
O never leave us more!

ABDERA.

Yielding to his embrace.
Fair, fair my brother.

JUBAL.

— Know'st thou nor guessest nothing who she is?

ABDERA.

She is the tree 'neath which we sing together,
Herself in all her boughs to Heaven singing.

JUBAL.

She sings not to the Heavens, but to the earth;
Once hoarsely, like a look-out overwatched,
Now in a new voice, battle-songs and birth-songs.

ABDERA.

When first I looked on her I seemed to sit
A child and sleepy in my father's tent;
The wandering prophet sang, and 'neath my lids
I saw great shapes rise out of elder time;
Beginning earth, with other beasts and birds;
Æonian forests where winged serpents flew;
Seasons not ours, and long since fallen gods.

JUBAL.

She saw creation's morning; she will stay
To watch the everlasting twilight fall. —

ABDERA.

Hush! —

JUBAL.

Looking about.

None to hear.

ABDERA.

Pointing in fear.

Look where above the sand
The hot light dances. Should it dance for naught?

JUBAL.

Know ye more gods but One?

ABDERA.

My fathers knew;
And sometimes I — Hush! Bow thee! They walk, they hear!

JUBAL.

Looking upward, toward the citadel.

Not gods, but men, come from the eyrie town,
Slow down the mountain stair! One walks between,
And two that stead him upon either hand;
And some before with singing, and yet some
Behind, with spears and banners.

ABDERA.

Whispers to Eve.

Cain, he comes!

All three rise and gaze upward. The procession descends. Cain, aged and broken, seats himself in the throne-seat surrounded by his armed men, while Eve, veiled but for the eyes, stands supported by Jubal and

Abdera. The chief officer at Cain's side lifts his hand.

CHIEF OFFICER.

The king is come into his judgment seat —
If any in this presence have a cause,
The time is gracious, and the king gives ear.

EVE.

Gazing from Cain to one and another of his men.

Seek not to try me, who am overtried!
Is this the king, or sits one in his room?

CAIN.

What says the woman?

OFFICER.

If thou be the king.

CAIN.

What should be answered?

OFFICER.

Mock not thy servant, lord,
Nor thy great self.

CAIN.

Mutters.

Still king, or not yet wakened
From dreaming such a matter.

To Eve.

Unveil thy face.
Uncover thee and speak.

Eve drops her veil. Cain stares with slow gathering terror, then rises.

Thou hag of hell,
Glare not upon me with those caverned eyes!

To his officers.

Whoever has done this, his life shall pay.
Do ye spread out your nets among the dead,
And toll them here out of the earth and air
To daunt me, and to shake me from myself?

To the priests who advance.

Try her if she be human! Speak the word!
Make the dread sign!

EVE.

Make not your sign on me!
For on your bloods and bodies ere the birth
Myself have made on you a mightier sign.
— Cain, Cain, dost thou not know me? Look again!

Cain, gazing at her stupefied, makes a sign to his men to leave him.

CAIN.

As they linger.

Back to the city! Away! Go, every one!

They mount the steps, with backward looks. An aged warrior lingers. Jubal and Abdera, clinging together in awe and fear, slip away down the desert path behind.

WARRIOR.

By one who in suspicion has grown grey,
And all to shield and warn thee, lord, be warned.
Many and subtle are thine enemies.
In many shapes they hunt thee for thy soul.

CAIN.

Leave us alone! Go, go! Alone, alone.

The old man mounts the steps. Cain, with averted head, mutters to Eve.

God knows I know thee not.

EVE.

Approaching nearer.

Cain, Cain, look up!
Grieve no more; pity my grief. Eve knows thou knowest.

He draws her to him, and sinks on the bench, — she at his feet, her head buried in his knees. Song above, distant.

CAIN.

As the singing ceases.

The first that I remember of my life

Was such a place, such a still afternoon,
I sitting thus, thy bright head in my knees,
And such a bird above us as him yonder
Who dips and hushes, lifts and takes his note.
I know not what child's trespass I had done,
Nor why it drove the girl out of thy face,
Clutched at thy heart with panic, and in thine
eyes
Set shuddering love.

EVE.

O my first-born, my child!
O herald star in the wilderness appearing,
After the nine-fold moon of dubious speech,
Proclaiming silence soon to fall in Heaven —
The everlasting silence that soon did fall,
When by me lay thy little frame of breathing,
And blind and weak thou foundest out the breast!

CAIN.

There was a day when winter held the hills
And all the lower places looking sunward
Knew that the spring was near. Until that day
I had but walked in a boy's dream and dazzle,
And in soft darkness folded on herself
My soul had spun her blind and silken house.

It was my birthday, for at earliest dawn
You had crept to me in the outer tent,
Kissed me with tears and laughter, whispering
low
That I was born, and that the world was there,
A gift you had imagined and made for me.
Now, as I climbed the morning hills, behold,
Those words were true: the world at last was there;
At last 't was mine, and I was born at last.
I walked, and on my shoulders and my reins
Strength rang like armor; I sat, and in my belly
Strength gnawed like a new vinegar; I ran
And strength was on me like superfluous wings,
Even the six wings of the cherubim,
Twice twain to cover me and twain to fly.

EVE.

O green tree! O the young man in the house!
A gold frontlet of pride, and a green cedar!
Pause.

CAIN.

His voice changes.
I knew that you would come.

EVE.

Lo, I am here.

CAIN.

And knew 't would be too late.

EVE.

In full good time.

CAIN.

Look on me; look once. Is this crazed frame
The thing Eve bare in joy? Let us climb down
Unto the sheep-pools; I will sit apart,
And do thou lean thee out over the pool
And look and tell me if that face be hers
Who waited while yon silence fell in Heaven
And Cain came forth the doors. — Too late, too late!

EVE.

Late, late, — but in fair time! Never too late.
Silence.

CAIN.

They told me Eve was dead.

EVE.

Startled.

They told — alas,
Who told?

CAIN.

Chance-comers, wanderers from the waste.

EVE.

And do chance-wandering tongues still sound this name?

CAIN.

Here one and there one, never aught aright,
But every man his tale, after his heart.

EVE.

Even in the tent my people do me this.
Even in my face, almost! Yea, I have lain,
Bowed on thy father's breast, and heard them do it.
I feigned to sleep; I heard them. And look you, son,
Here is the worst. Their glozing tales once heard,
Once pored on through long watches of the night,
They rise before my soul like very truth,
As bright, as fair, as strange, — almost, almost!

CAIN.

Darkly.

On Adam's breast? How long since?

EVE.

The road is far,
And hard to find. Also, the second moon,

One camel sickened, and his pining mate
Went laggard. — Son, what ails thee?

CAIN.

He lives?

EVE.

Who lives?
— Aye, aye, he lives. Hast heard aught, child?
He lives,
Surely thy father lives.

CAIN.

And thou art here?

EVE.

But most for his sake. — Listen while I tell!
— Why do you harshly thrust my hands away,
And lift your clenched hands trembling to the sky
With wild and smothered words?

CAIN.

Pushing her from him.

I know you not,
Unclasp my knees. — I thought you were yourself.
Yours, therefore mine at last. It is not so.
His, his, the same as when he cursed me forth
And Eve stood stockish, never one plea made,

One wail set up, one gesture of farewell,
No more than from a stone!

EVE.

She was a stone;
As afterwards, long years, a frozen stone.
No seasons and no weather on the earth;
Sun, moon, and stars dead in a field of death;
And in her dead heart, nothing, nothing, nothing!
After long years, she wakened, knew herself,
Rose up to wring some profit from her days,
Conceived again, and once again brought forth;
Yea, saw the teeming race in circles kindle
Roaring to God, a flame of generation.
From out the tossing battle of that fire
Flashed seldom and again wild news of thee,
And one red instant, ere night drove between,
Thy form would stand gigantic in the glare,
Islanded huge among thine enemies, —
As when the ice-bear rears upon the floe
And swings her flailing paws against the pack,
Or when the sea-volcano from his loins
Shakes climbing cities.

CAIN.

Better, better far

That Eve had never sought, nor Cain been found,
Than thus, being together, to be sundered
More than by ice-fields or the raving sea.

EVE.

O Cain, how sundered? — Look on me! Kiss my
lips,
And feel it is not so.

CAIN.

Repulsing her.

'T is not so then.
There is no gateway shut between our souls,
No watchers stationed, and no lifted sword
Flaming forever!

EVE.

Ere I fled to thee
I knelt in fear by Abel's altar-mound
And begged his leave to go. His spirit rose,
Or seemed to rise, and seemed to threaten me.
The same night on thy father's breast I bowed,
And spoke of this my journey. In his eyes,
If still they seemed to know me who I was,
Kindled none other knowledge. — Albeit I rose,
And fled away, and suffered much, and came,
Thy name among the nations my sole guide,
Desire of thee my strength and company.

— Be glad of me! O lovingly entreat me!
Make all my meanings good, till such a time
As these our wounds are healed. Then if, perchance,
Our hearts at ease, I something should unveil
My stranger will, my cloudier purposes —

CAIN.

Yea, yea, I wondered what would lurk behind!
— Not for my sake, that were too mere a mother.
— Wills, purposes! Lo, am I taken in
Because your tongue veers off and skirts the quick?
Do I not hear the words you dare not speak
Thunder above your speech? Do not your eyes
Hover and flinch and crawl upon my brow,
Seeking, and shuddering off to turn again
In sick and deadly search? — Look then! 'T is here.
He pushes back the head-band, baring the sign.
It is not faded, though these hands have shed
Rivers of kindred blood to wash it off.
— 'T was this you came for: bring your errand full.
Look and begone!

Eve, staring at the Sign, has fainted. Her head drops on Cain's shoulder. He tries to lift her head.

Pitiful God, not this!
She could not come after the endless years,
To go so soon. — Mother, thou wilt not deal
Thus much unkindness to an unkind son,
As leave him when harsh words were on his lips.
Of old, when in our rage we thrust thee out,
Thou wouldst return again, unreconciled
To harshness and to wrath. O do it now,
In pity!

EVE.

Waking.

Where am I?

CAIN.

Thou living Dread,
Whose fountains yet flow mercy!

EVE.

What hath passed? —
A faintness overfell me. Often of late,
But never quite so deep, so heavy deep.
I am far come, child. Lead me to thy house.
Much must be said, but there is time for all.
Nothing in haste; nothing before its hour.

CAIN.

Wait till I call my people.

EVE.

Rising.

I am strong.
We will go up together. — I have dreamed
Of this our going-in, and spite of all
'T is very like my dream, yea, very like. —
Thy people cursed me, stoned and thrust me down;
But now I walk under thy mighty shadow. —
She pauses in their ascent, and looks out over the desert.
Where will my children be?

CAIN.

Thy children, mother?

EVE.

Jubal, my travel-mate, a stripling boy
But great of heart; and Abdera, thy maid.

CAIN.

Mine?

EVE.

So: thou hast forgot or never knew.
Leave them; no matter where. They cannot stray.
The sun will shepherd them.

CAIN.

The sun is set.

EVE.

The stars, then, pouring influence. — Lead me on.
Art thou faint, also? Two can make a strength.

They begin to mount the steps. Above, Azrael, the Death Angel, appears, slowly descending, as from the city. With his left hand he clasps to his breast the hilt of a long sword; in his right he holds a stalk of flowering asphodel. Eve, seeing him, shrinks back, drawing Cain with her. Azrael, gazing at the pair, lifts the asphodel and descends to the left by a desert path, disappearing behind the Seat of Supplication. Eve gazes at the apparition in terrified silence, points at it as it disappears, then hides her head in Cain's breast.

CAIN.

What ails thee, mother? Why dost thou point and peer
And shrink away —?

EVE.

Whispers.

Saw'st nothing?

CAIN.

Where?

EVE.

Pointing.

Yonder.
And there, and yonder.

CAIN.

Nothing.

EVE.

Look again!

Eve stands with face averted, while Cain peers over where the path behind the Seat of Supplication descends hidden to the plain.

CAIN.

Two by the sheep-wells walking.

EVE.

Two?

CAIN.

Thine eyes!

Thy lips, mother!

EVE.

How many did ye say?

CAIN.

Twain, boy and girl.

EVE.

Lord, Lord!

CAIN.

Mother, thy face —?

EVE.

And this my son saw nothing!

CAIN.

What should I see?

EVE.

Nothing. — I praise Him. Long years yet for thee, —
Fair years, till then. — Nothing. I praise Him!

CAIN.

Thou hast endured too much. If in her house
And throne of rule that sovereign mind be shaken,
Yet night and sleep and the new-risen day —

EVE.

Nor night nor day can help me who have seen
The angel of the Lord, the summoner.
There, there he stood, and lifted slowly up
His pallid flower, and without speech said, "Come!"
As once before in Adam's tent he did,
And Eve, beholding, rose and fled away,
To look on thee ere darkness. Son, thou strength,
Spread thy strong hands o'er this rebellious head,
That our two strengths yet for a little while
May hold against Jehovah! My fierce son,

Thou burning flame from childhood, look on me
And say that thou wilt do it, though the skies
Open to warn us back! Thy promise, Cain!

CAIN.

What would ye of me, that these opening skies
And that up-startled Wrath — ?

EVE.

I had a son
Who questioned his own wrath, the skies thereof,
His own heart's wrathful skies, what they were prone to,
And seeing where his will went, followed it.
I came to find that son. And shall I find him
But as the rest, whose marrow in their bones
Curdles to hear Eve's whisper? Nay, thou Cain,
Whose soul is as a torch blown back for speed,
'T is thou shalt light me on that fearful way
That I must go, and that I haste to go
Ere darkness falls forever.

CAIN.

Though Cain were still
That flame which once he was, how should he light thee,

Not knowing of thy way nor of thine errand?
Fearful? And be it so. My goings-out
And comings-in be fearful. Tell me plain.

EVE.

Plain will I tell thee, son. — There was a place —
There was a place — and it will still be there,
For nightly I am told so — there is a place
That once —

CAIN.

Mother!

EVE.

That once I knew —

CAIN.

O woman!

EVE.

Thou sayest. — A place that Eve the woman knew,
Once, far off, long ago, when she was young —
With him —

CAIN.

Hush!

EVE.

Young with him —

CAIN.

Wilt thou be still?

EVE.

Adam the man—

CAIN.

Woe on thee!

EVE.

Him the man
And her the woman, in their ignorance —
And still it waits there, waits for her to come,
Now she has gathered up a little knowledge. —
Be patient, child. — See, I am very patient.
I tell thee quietly I would go thither;
Ere darkness falls, Eve must go back again.
She hath an errand.

CAIN.

Will thy lips cease now,
Ere they bring doomsday down?

EVE.

Hast ever — listen —
Hast ever, in thy desert wanderings,
Seen, or had news? Seen mayhap afar off —?

CAIN.

Once, once!

EVE.

Far off? Or near to?

CAIN.

Near enough.

EVE.

Ye stood and saw?

CAIN.

Yea, verily.

EVE.

How near?

CAIN.

Flesh goes not nearer than this flesh went near,
Yet 't was far off.

EVE.

How far?

CAIN.

Far as a hawk
Up-wind can keep his wings set.

EVE.

Very near!
— Saw'st thou —?

CAIN.

O mother, hush on what I saw!
Hush, for thy life's sake, for thy reason's sake.
— Night falls. Lean on me; let me lead thee home.

EVE.

Home thou must lead me, to that wondrous home
That was and is and shall be till I come.
— Turn not away so! — Touching this same journey,
I humbly do beseech thee, look thereon,
And be well pleased to lend thy royal favor,
Thereto the needed beasts and muniments
Proportioned to the distance and the time;
This only being besought, that my twain children,
Jubal and her, go up with me along
Into the gaze and silence of the Lord,
And that our starting be by dawn to-morrow. —
Unless, by favor, thy decreeing lips
Should breathe "To-night" and do it. Might it be?
'T is but an hour to moonrise, and the moon
Is at her full, or nearly. Say'st "To-night?"
Aye, aye, thy silence cries I have a son!
— To-night! That is right royal.

CAIN.

Neither to-night,
Nor yet to-morrow, nor the day to come,
Nor any day till Cain, Eve's bloody son,
Gone brain-sick as his dam — Call to him then
And haply he will hear thee where he raves
Above his moaning nation! But for now —

EVE.

Now, even now. So, I beseech no more.
But lay on thee my still and high command.

CAIN.

I will not hear thee; cannot, dare not hear!

EVE.

Thou wilt not hear me? Yea, but thou wilt hear!
Thy ears be not thy ears. I moulded them.
Thy life is not thy life. I gave it thee,
And do require it back. Thy beating heart
Beats not unto itself, but unto me,
Whose voice did tell it when to beat and how.
Thy deeds are not thy deeds. Ye conned them here,
Under this breast, where lay great store of deeds
Undone, for thee to choose from.
She uncovers the Sign on his forehead.

'T is not thy head
Weareth this Sign. 'T is my most cruel head,
Whose cruel hand, whose swift and bloody hand
Smote in its rage my own fair man-child down.
Not thy hand, Cain, not thine; but my dark hand;
And my dark forehead wears the sign thereof,
As now I take it on me.

She kisses him on the Sign.

CAIN.

With bowed head.

Peace, at last.
After these struggles, peace.

EVE.

At dawn, O Cain?

CAIN.

Whenever and wherever.

EVE.

My great son!

Cain and Eve mount toward the gate, and pass through, out of sight. Jubal and Abdera appear from the valley, behind the Seat of Supplication, and mount toward the city. Under the gate Jubal stops and looks over the desert.

JUBAL.

O Abdera, the strangeness of the world.

ABDERA.

Not strange. — Strange, strange before; no longer so.

JUBAL.

Look where the star leans flaming from his throne
And viewless worlds are suppliant in his porches.
They pass through the gate and disappear, climbing upward.

END OF VOLUME I

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